

Submission
No 389

**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.

Teachers do not feel equipped, confident or well supported to provide the necessary support for students. Often they do not have adequate time to organise the adjustments and support that students with disabilities require. Students are often enrolled in schools without time allowed to adequately assess their requirements and organise adjustments before they commence. School counsellors often work minimal days in schools and there is not adequate time to meet and discuss a student's needs and requirements especially in terms of SLSO support. Teachers are left to organise and re-organise their programs and classroom settings to best manage each student's disability. There is limited support from support staff to access any required equipment. The process to receive integration funding is limiting and not straightforward. It is difficult to know what funding is available and how to access it. Access Requests are often completed at an executive level with some input from the teacher. Teachers often do not know the placement panel process. Students have at times been offered a place at an SSP and the school is first aware when the parent confirms enrolment. Sometimes the parent expects the student will start the next day. This does not give the school adequate time to prepare for the student's needs. Schools often do not have adequate resources to provide reasonable adjustments for students. The process to obtain resources can be both time consuming and lengthy in the delivery.

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.

The reallocation of 9 categories of support teacher to the single LaS meant a significant loss of teachers with specific expertise. These teachers were also challenged to provide assistance in areas of disability they were not familiar or confident in to deliver adequate support. The roles of Assistant

Principal Learning Assistant and Assistant Principal Behaviour were justified and each demonstrated expertise. Combining under the one Assistant Principal Learning and Support increased the load and does not provide an adequate level of time to address both effectively. Students with low level needs are not catered for adequately to assist their learning significantly and they continue to fall further behind their peers each year. ESES has not adequately addressed the needs of the majority of students. There has been scope to provide a strong Literacy program however it can only target some students. As a special school there has only been minimal interest from mainstream schools to learn from the models and strategies in us. There is limited time to construct an adequate program to assist mainstream schools with professional development. The RAM is not adequate to increase student outcomes by providing required resources or teacher training.

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.

Very few of the recommendations have been addressed adequately

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

There is some time available however teachers are limited in their availability during the day and it can be difficult to coordinate with all parents effectively. Teachers aim to make meetings before or after school or during their RFF. Sometimes followup meetings are required or meetings that coordinate with therapists.

E) Any other related matters.

This email was sent from the NSW Teachers Federation website.