

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

Name: James Meehan High School

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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.

Point 1. All students who require additional support do not receive adequate and timely support. There is not enough staff for the high support needs of students. There is not enough pre-service specialist training for educational needs(non-curriculum information and working knowledge of process). Point 2. Totally inadequate access to required time for school counsellor. Timetabling restraints inhibits ability of teachers to access trained support staff and /or professional development. Lack of targetted funding to employ additional trained staff to suppoort individual students. Point 3. Beauracratic processes involved in accessing IFS is cumbersome and exclusive. Criteria regulations to met IFS is very limited. Limited staff awareness of IFS and how to access it. Professional judgement is unable to be considered. Teachers unable to access IFS in a timely realistic manner. Funding is very limited. Ongoing professional training from regional staff is urgently needed. Point 4. Support. Access request process is complicated. Limited places available to student. Limited number of teachers have expert knowledge of complicated Access request process. Access request is exclusive and relies heavily on small number of teacher judgement. Support placements are declined with little to no feedback about reason for the decline. No additional options offered for students who are declined. Lack of available places for secondary students with a diagnosis of both Autism and Mental Health difficulties. No interim support offered for students waiting for support placements. Point 5. Specialist equipment/environmental adjustments currently have no enrolments for students requiring specialist equipment or environmental adjustments as the layout and physical conditions of the school inhibit access. Point 6. Access to Assistant Principal Learning & Support and other specialist personnel has become limited due to personnel being placed back into schools. Due to changes around school based experience regulations have limited access to staff with extensive knowledge and experience. Unfilled vacancies creating lack of access to services. Point 7. Lack of access to school counsellor for assessment means students needs remain unidentified and unsupported. Lack of access to specific specialist training to accomodate specific student needs. Lack of teritary qualified

staff. Lack of funding to provide Teacher Professional Learning for enough staff. No resources to plan effective transition planning for students. Huge time constraints. Limited and restrictive access to support Teacher Transition for students with confirmed disabilities.

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.

Point 1. Loss of special corporate support knowledge and training provided at school levels by the reallocation of support teachers. placed unrealistic demands of time of Learning and Support teachers. Thinly spread levels of support . Lack of time and availability. Superficial rather than in depth support provided to schools. Using Student Learning Needs Index is not accurate reflection of the needs of the school. Funding is not accurately identified and many students who require additional and specific support are missing out. The establishment of areas of expertise were limited in their scope and did not filter down to schools. Failure to disseminate information. Lack of networking. Lack of awareness from school about availability of expertise. Point 1. Professional- No comment. Online training modules have assisted the training needs of students. Point 2. No. Yes but need more LAST. No immediate access to additional support. Point 3. No. Knowledge and expertise not filtered down. Point 4. At this stage staff not fully equipped as they are still developing the identification of strengths, abilities, skills and learning needs of students with disabilities. Point 5. No - enhanced access. RAM No as RAM funding is in no way adequate resources to cater for the needs of students - due to low allocation. No has not strengthened partnerships with school, parents, carers, no increased student participation or engagement with their learning.

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.

31 Recommendations. 1. No, 2. No, 3. Not known /no comment 4. No 5. No (lack of school counsellors) 6. No standard proforma 7. No comment 8. Have acknowledge, no secondary support classes for students with autism and major mental health issues. 9. No idea 10. NO comment 11. Never heard of it 12.No comment 13 True yes 14 Yes 15. No 16 Maintain 17.Yes - but not clear/vague 18. No comment 19. No comment 20. No 21. No 22. No on a part time basis 23. No 24. Yes done through NCCD 25 No time given 26 Yes 27. Yes most universities 28 Yes but needs to be more specific and intensive 29. They are working towards it 30. Yes 31. Not yet - but need training.

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

No - no capacity or resources- restricted to limited resources and timetabling constraints

E) Any other related matters.

NEED -Targetted funding -experiences/qualified specialist staff -TPL for all -Personal support increased at region to support complex cases -Consultants to be available to assist in training of staff and raising awareness in community -More specialist support places to be made available especially for secondary students with BOTH autism and mental health -consistent and transparent process for disability provision applications -Employment of specialist trained psychologists to support staff and students based on the needs of local area rather than numbers of students -Training of SLSO's - School numbers do not reflect the needs of the cohort and must not be used to determine staffing and funding resources -Improving and upgrading the physical environment of the school to reflect

the needs of all students. Students expected to perform in unsatisfactory classroom conditions (eg air conditioning) -Consideration of staffing qualifications/experience in low-socio economic areas where levels of disability are predominately higher. -Improved pre service teacher training for addressing behaviour and wellbeing needs

This email was sent from the NSW Teachers Federation website.