

a) current levels of access and attainment for students with disability in the school system, and the impact on students and families associated with inadequate levels of support;

Our daughter is 7 years old and in a local public school in the Northern Sydney Region.

She has a confirmed diagnosis of Impairment to read (dyslexia) and has a level of literacy of a preschool child and sensory processing issues.

This child has an average IQ and does have behaviour problems that prevents her from being supported in a local school. In fact her very complying nature is probably making it easier for her to fall behind as she isn't being a disruption to the other 24 students in her class.

She has had the formal confirmation for over 12 months, this has changed nothing for her and her level of reading just falls further behind that of her peers.

Over the past 2 years it appears the only way to bring about change at her school is to seek reviews from regional officers, the minister of education and our local member.

The recommendations made in reports have not been adopted by the school voluntary, it appears the executive don't have to comply with greater departmental policies of inclusion for all and providing an educational experience that is equivalent to her peers.

The school have made it very clear there is no empathy to our situation and can be downright difficult to deal with unless you formally complaint to the regional office.

It should be noted that the director of the region has provided a very different level of professionalism and understanding to our family.

The school has failed to respond to requests for information from medical experts, failed to take on board recommendations of occupational therapists and NSW Health. This has impacted on the medical care of our child and delayed her progress and learning experience.

In the 3 years we have been in formal education the level of professionalism of her class teachers could not be faulted.

It appears that the leadership team at the school are desperate not to spend all available funds and this can be seen in a surplus of \$80,000 achieved over 3 years of the annual school report.

It's not an unrealistic question to ask what you didn't provide for the students to make these savings.

So maybe not only lack of funding needs to be addressed by the use of funding should be looked into more detail.

It appears we are not able to gain basic learning support that is suitable for our child unless we formally complain, write to the director and be that squeaky wheel.

Squeaky wheels cost the department a lot of time and money to respond to complaints and investigate breaches of duty of care... if the department just made an expectation on the leadership teams of all schools to provide best practices rather than minimum standards things would improve for all especially staff of the department.

Is this really supporting children with additional needs if the parent has to drive all forms of support requests?

It should be noted that the 4 surrounding public primary schools do provided 1:1 support but have closed borders. So it's not a case of just switching schools, why can one government school in the region do it and another be able to not provide the support.

How can it be the case when a child who happens to live 2km away from another child with the same learning difficulties not receive the same support in NSW.

POSTAL ADDRESS SHOULDN'T BE THE REASON FOR SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF A CHILD.

The school has made it very clear we should be prepared for her not to learn to read in year 2.

How that even an option is in a modern educational system to have a child in year 2 not able to read at a basic level, when does failure to learn to read become so critical that intervention is forced to be provided?

The school have made claims that they don't have teaching staff able to teach a child with dyslexia to read even though the department of education has online learning packages for teachers.

1 in 10 people have this learning difference... it would be one of the most common learning differences in public schools.

The school has also indicated that our child will not be taught to read as there are no parent helpers to assist with her reading. While I acknowledge that parent helpers are important the support of the school, the education of a child in a NSW

department of education school should not rely on other parents to teach them to read.

The only other option is to take our case to the human rights commission and see if they will make a ruling in favour of our child to be provided reading support.

This is such a waste of time not to mention missed opportunities of our child in year 2 while we go out to another government department to review her case.

I hope this review prevents the next family of a child with dyslexia from going through the stress and time wasting that our family has too.

b) the social, economic and personal benefits of improving outcomes for students with disability at school and in further education and employment;

Social: Our daughter's self-esteem is dropping daily as she can't read the most basic of things, this impacts on her ability to play games with other students, follow instructions on the board and has been called dumb by some students because she can't read.

She was being bullied by one student on a daily basis and we felt powerless to stop this. I ended up having to write to my local member of parliament and request he assist us.

Why aren't more provisions put in place to protect children with learning disabilities from being bullied.

This has created long term mental health issues that will end up costing the government a lot more to support her in later life. Mental health is one of the nation's growing concerns... the link to poor educational experiences and mental health are very clear.

A perfect example of socially, our child has library class each week and is expected to borrow two books and read them, she can't read but takes them anyway.

We have made several requests for the school to provide her audio books to borrow so she can still feel like the other children and have access to literacy in a media she is able to enjoy.

These requests have been denied every time.

This is indirect discrimination but we are powerless to make the school provide them without possibly writing off the minister again or the human rights commission.

It should not have to be so hard for her to be supported in the school.

Socially as parents having a child with an invisible disability is extremely hard. The school sees us raising our concerns as causing trouble and we are left always feeling that we are demanding too much for just requesting the she is taught to read and not being bullied.

The basic rights of the child in this situation are never taken into consideration, she was expected to just cope with the bully and turn the other cheek!

She misses out on doing another after school activity as we can't afford both and literacy has to come first.

Economic: We spend over \$150 a week on private reading classes to try and support our daughter's efforts to read.

There is no economic support for impairment to read.. I feel having your child taught a basic level of reading should not be a cost our family should be required to support.

Equity needs to be addressed when it comes to support at government schools.

c) the impact on policies and the education practice of individual education sectors as a result of the More Support for Students with Disabilities program, and the impact of the cessation of this program in 2014 on schools and students;

Our daughter started her formal education in 2013 and at no time has she been provided with targeted literacy support.

While additional funding is provided to support children failing to make basic literacy standards in year 1.

This reading recovery or similar programs are part of the much needed support for children like her yes 1 in 10 children have this issue.

The principal at her school now has the ability to redirect funds to other areas that would have been sent for children like our child to support her literacy.

h) What should be done to better support students with disability in our schools?

As a parent I wanted to make a complaint about the lack of support for our child at her school and in the process we learnt that there are so many road blocks put in my way that made it quite hard to find out basic information on the funding process and the steps to obtain a review of funding.

I also learnt that even if the director of the region made a recommendation for support be provided to our child the principal didn't have to follow the recommendations.

How can one person who sits in a role of principal be able to impact on the success of a child rather than following the departments policies and views of inclusion, support, best outcomes and be able to breach the Disability Act provisions while being protected by the department that is stating these wonderful inclusion for all ideas???

I am sure we are not alone in the feeling of being lost against the department of education way of preventing parents asking questions into the use of funding for literacy support for their children.

There should be an advocate for children with a disability for each region in which the parents can contact to offer support at meetings with the school. Who will provide timely advice on policy's and standard department practices, access to funding and assist in the inclusion support of the child?

It appears to be set up the completely the other way round and a culture of protecting the department at all costs has been fostered which enables poor decisions to be support time and time again.

We feel like we are being bullied by the leadership team every time we make an enquiry into her learning support or the methods of teaching.

Likewise when we are requesting copies of work more details on the individual learning plans and reasons as to why no progress is being made in her literacy when they claim that improvements can be seen in the classroom environment without a targeted daily intervention.

I often attend these meetings alone and are faced with 5 department staff all with different reasons as to why they actually can't find the time or money to teach our child to read.

The level of accountability on the progress of a child with a disability I feel isn't being addressed and the school executives are able to use lack of funding support as a reason for success rather than thinking of how they can better support the child. Why at one department of education school is a child with a reading level below peers given support in a targeted reading program when a similar student at another school not.

If more accountability on the spending of allocated funds to be targeted back to the child that attracted the funding there would be a better outcome for children with confirmed disabilities.

In closing I hope that the system changes and so does the culture of the department of education's school executives so it will not be so hard for parent to ensure that their child is given the same level of support as any other child with the same disability in NSW.

I thank you for taking time to read our families submission.

M Klingstrom