

Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on School Funding
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Submission to the Senate Select Committee on School Funding

I am a Secondary trained teacher but since I've had my children, I have done additional training (at my own expense) and teach in a Special Developmental School with Intellectually Disabled Children, aged between 15 and 16 years of age. They have a moderate to severe intellectual disability. I have also 2 children that have been through the Government school system, believing that they should attend schools in the system that I believe in. My daughter, now 29, is currently completing her Masters in Teaching at Melbourne University & will be teaching English Literature and Aboriginal Studies (Humanities). My husband is also a Visual Arts teacher of more than 30 years.

The original promise of 6 years of Gonski funding, as promised to the public, would enhance the programs that many teachers and Educational Support staff design and implement tirelessly to students in our school that display very challenging behaviours at times; motivation and creativity is a great tool for any student, but for students with a moderate to severe intellectual disability (sometimes with other disabilities as a result of a particular syndrome or cerebral palsy, for example), provision of quality and effective programs is essential. To enable this to continue, staff need access to materials to make resources, resources to develop students' skills such as iPads, touch screens and adapted mice for access to computers, which is often their only means of writing, staff attendance of Professional Development to continue to search for and learn great ideas that will assist these students, funding for Therapists that assist our staff, students and parents such as Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapists and swimming

instructors; adapted playground equipment and bikes are expensive but enable our students to access the experiences that they should be entitled to (as in mainstream schools); the list is endless.

Parents have many issues to deal with when they have an intellectually disabled child, but they should have a guarantee from the school that their child attends that they will be given the same opportunities that every other student has and that is to guide them to reach their full potential in a supportive environment with the necessary resources - teachers, support staff, class rooms and resources.

I ask you to consider how empowering 13 years of quality education can be for a child and their family - seeing them reach their full potential. That's what keeps me working in this area, despite the limitations I face on a daily basis. I hope the Senate committee is not going to abuse my goodwill and that they will take a broader outlook to the far reaching benefits that these promised Gonski reforms were going to accomplish for our school and every other schools that would be able to present similar arguments. Financing of education settings needs to be seen as fair to every student, regardless of who they are!

Submitted by Christine Handson, Teacher, Parent and Community Member
regarding Mt Evelyn Special Developmental School

Friday 14 March 2014