

Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on School Funding
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Submission to the Senate Select Committee on School Funding

I am mother to two young boys, both with disabilities attending mainstream education at Harmony Primary in WA. My eldest son has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, while my youngest has Pendred Syndrome and is profoundly hearing impaired as a result. I am involved in many peer-support groups, and sit on the board of Camp Autism WA Inc. as well as the City of Cockburn Disability Reference Group. Through my involvement in the disability sector I am regularly interacting with many local families and believe this gives me a great overview of the issues that are concerning parents of children with disabilities and the ability to see that our concerns in relation to the public education system within WA are the same.

Gonski funding, and WA signing up for the recommendations of the Gonski review, is of the utmost importance to me. ALL children need more support than they currently receive. The system is flawed and does not currently look after those at a disadvantage. My school would see measurable improvement with:

- * More support for my children, and others with disabilities and are the most vulnerable within this system.
- * Less occurrence of children with funding missing out on support when it is pulled from them to assist a child that doesn't receive any (or enough) funding.
- * Ability for teachers and assistants to receive extra training, such as on Autism or hearing impairment in our case, so that they are better prepared and able to help children with disabilities perform at their best.
- * Peace of mind for parents with children with anaphylaxis as their children would

be better supported and supervised within the playground on break times.

* More specialist teachers, allowing children the best possible education.

* More support staff within the school for all children.

Submitted by Samantha Powell regarding Harmony Primary School

Friday 14 March 2014