

Dear Senator,

I am a Masters student of Educational and Developmental Psychology and I am speaking on behalf of our college to help promote the important role we currently play in schools. This may be something of which you are not fully aware of, so I hope my message will provide you further insight. From my perspective the role of the Educational & Developmental psychologist is partly primary care, where we are in a position to address early signs of mental health difficulties in students that can prevent them from achieving their full potential educationally and as full participants in our society.

The following is a list put together by college supporters providing further information about our role and what is needed:

- ➤ Educational and developmental psychologists are central in the provision of mental health services to children, adolescents and their parents through the school network. This is a cost effective and pre-existing means of providing mental health services.
- ➤ Educational and developmental psychologists are better qualified than other psychologists and professionals at dealing with psychological matters pertaining to schools, education, students, and developmental issues of all ages.
- ➤ Educational and developmental psychologists have traditionally been exceptionally well placed to provide psychological and mental health services to all Australians as they attend primary and secondary schools.
- ➤ Educational and developmental psychologists provide excellent front line services to students, parents and school staff across a range of mental health, welfare, psycho-educational and developmental areas.
- ➤ Service provision and funding has been diminishing as responsibility has defaulted to schools.
- ➤ Educational and developmental services should be increased to include funded triage, diagnosis and case management in conjunction with GPs.
- ➤ Greater funding for services to special groups of students is required (e.g. autism, conduct disorder).
- ➤ There are too few educational development psychologist in schools nationally particularly in some states like Queensland.
- ➤ A major disincentive to become an Educational and Developmental Psychologist of six years minimum training is the absence of adequate remuneration – in some States far less than teacher salaries with poorer benefits.

Please take into account the points made herein during your current inquiry for the commonwealth funding and administration of mental health services in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Geraldine Lane.

