

Review of the loading for students with disability 2019–public submission

Mrs Gina Trimble

Stakeholder type: Teacher
Jurisdiction: New South Wales

Summary

Funding needs to be increased at every level.

Many factors need to be considered and can always be documented and evidenced.

Teachers and schools should be valued for their professionalism and this should be taken into consideration for funding.

All costs for the NCCD should be factored into the funding and more support and resources provided to make this less onerous.

Submission

Questions

Focus question 1

The short and obvious answer to this question is, no. At every level the funding is inadequate in addressing the needs of students. The linking of the level of resourcing to the level of adjustments is too simplistic and fails to provide for the individual needs of students. In some instances this disparity of funding and needs is relatively small, but in most cases the disparity is significant and results in the students' needs not being met, the teachers overwhelmed and the school budget under enormous strain.

There are many factors that impact on the cost of adjustments such as setting, context, stage of education, student background, parental skills and motivation. The NCCD does not adequately nor comprehensively allow for this details to be included. Instead, the focus is on the 'gathering of evidence' to justify the funding. The needs of the students could be more accurately and cost effectively determined by respecting the professionalism of the teachers and the public education system, and the funds saved from this expense be used to resource the needs of students.

The NCCD data also focuses mostly on learning adjustments in the classroom environment and there is little provision for adjustments in the social setting or playground where students with disability are often most vulnerable.

The NCCD is an important and exciting opportunity to build on ability of students, creating an inclusive school environment where all students feel welcomed and can thrive academically, physically, emotionally and socially.

All costs associated with the NCCD should be factored into the loadings as this is a resource that is essential under the NCCD Federal funding framework. If it is not factored into the funding, the school has to cover the cost and eat into the already depleted funds of schools. This is particularly problematic in the public education system where it is not possible to address this deficit with a 'fee increase' which the publically-funded non-government schools can implement, furthering the gap between the public and private/independent education systems. At the moment the funding, which should be 'needs-based', is in fact 'privilege-based'. Advantaging schools that are able to dedicate resourcing to the gathering of evidence, while the under resourced public sector is struggling to comprehensively document the required evidence.

Focus question 2

The processes are sufficiently robust but do not make enough allowance for the professional judgment of the public school teacher. To address this, training and support services for schools should be implemented to enable accuracy when assessing the needs of students with disability.