

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

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**Anonymous 1**

Stakeholder type: Principal

Jurisdiction: Victoria

### Summary

Funding at supplementary is too low.

Factors making it difficult to resource for NCCD students include

- Regionality, lack of access to local resources & services, low SES, higher regional costs
- Wide variety of different needs in any one school classroom or environment
- Wide variation in student need at different times of the year, and lack of 'flexibility' in resourcing
- Lack of and consistency of appropriate mental health care in regional areas

Compliance processes and procedures are outrageously time consuming and draw resources away from students with additional learning needs.

There is enormous variation from school to school regarding what data is collected, how it is collected, how it is stored, as well as the processes surrounding all of this. 'Consistency' is being confused with 'compliance'.

Teachers and school leaders want to get back to learning and teaching and away from the compliance nightmare.

### Submission

#### Questions

The funding for students with substantial and extensive needs is reasonable. The funding for the vast bulk of students with supplementary is insufficient. It is this group that the school frequently 'finds' resources that are taken from other areas to support to ensure equity of participation.

While the levels of disability from one level to the next are significant, the fact that the number of students in the supplementary category is relatively high and their learning needs associated with their disability are often very diverse, adjusting for the needs of this group in the classroom and other school environments is a real challenge with this level of funding.

As our College is in a regional setting and in a very low SES area (88) we don't have access to many of the community resources and supports that are available to schools in much higher SES areas or in rural city or urban locations. The cost of provision of services and resources are also frequently higher in regional areas.

Our school has noticed much more need for adjustment for students at the transitioning from primary to secondary school. There is also a greater need for adjustment as they move into senior secondary education. The supports provided by the College at these levels are far greater at these points, although not effectively changing the level of adjustment.

The costs of collection, assurance and management of the NCCD at the school level have been significant. The amount of time required as Principal, the time of my Learner diversity leader and administration have been substantial in simply meeting NCCD compliance requirements. Further to this is the time spent in consultation with students, parents and staff to implement meaningful adjustments. There is little difference in terms of compliance in the amount of time and resources that are 'used up' in compliance processes and documentation for students at QDTP, supplementary or substantial levels. I would prefer to be directing these resources to the students and their outcomes. Further to this, due to lack of clarity around exactly what

documentation is required, lack of common templates around how it is collected and very different practices and processes from school to school, I believe that any suggestion that the data is 'consistent' is delusional. As a starting point, and at the minimum, costs that should be factored into the loadings should include administrative support for the collection and maintenance of student records, time release for Parent Support Group meetings, follow-up and moderation, development of ICT systems to gather the required compliance data, development of pro-formas to gather the data (in the absence of system-wide tools), staff professional learning and documentation.

Other factors that impact on the the level of resources required include the discontinuation of mental health services in our region created by the 2 year funding and application cycle that consistently leaves a 3 month 'gap' between the end of one funding period and the start of the next, leaving many our most vulnerable students without effective mental health support, and inconsistent delivery. This is something that has been left unchanged despite the acknowledged need, particularly in rural and regional areas, and the political rhetoric about addressing these needs. It is also often very difficult to resource effectively when the needs for adjustment vary significantly at any point. There is little 'agility' in schools workforces, due to the current agreement, to vary staff hours significantly in line with high needs periods, for example, at the start of new school years and exam times, for major school events or when a significant new situation emerges suddenly of urgently. Some supplementary adjustments for students can be very expensive but needed by many students to participate fully eg: particular computers, software programmes or 'reading pens' for students with dyslexia or dysgraphia.

The assurance processes are a nightmare. They are time consuming and do not provide consistency from one setting to the next. We should be spending far more time on making adjustment for students and supporting them and far less 'flushing our time down the NCCD time toilet'. I am absolutely amazed that schools cannot be trusted to attend to students needs without this level of 'red tape'. The cynic in me says that someone is ensuring themselves of ongoing employment, or making considerable money out of this scheme. It could be improved by allowing schools to get on with their work of teaching, and Principals their work of leading learning and getting the heck out of the compliance black hole that as a Principal, is consuming my time, my energy and my will to live.