# LEARNING SUPPORT

# IN NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cover graphic: Voices unheard, Kayla Furbish

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The Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney received funding from the New South Wales Teachers Federation to investigate the achievements of the 'Every Student, Every School' initiative undertaken by the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities. In examining these achievements, the study also aimed to investigate how the initiative could be enhanced further.

This report examines the achievements of the 'Every student, Every School' (ESES) initiative which was introduced into NSW Public Schools in April 2012 based on empirical research undertaken in 2014[1]. Funded initially under the Australian Government More Support for Students with Disabilities program, the ESES program aims to find better ways of meeting the additional learning and support needs of every student, through building capacity and support within school communities. The ESES framework aims to diversify knowledge, resources and experience about quality education programs rather than concentrating the specialist knowledge in Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs) (Department of Education and Communities, 2012), support classes or specialist teachers. In this way ESES signalled a cultural shift in education for students with additional learning and support needs. Advocates envisaged that ESES would facilitate the enactment of the Education Standards within the Disability Discrimination Act, and uphold the intent of the Melbourne Declaration.  This study provides an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of ESES in facilitating this cultural shift and to suggest some future strategies.

The study adopted a mixed methodology, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Mixed methodology aims to overcome the limitations of both approaches, enabling both a breadth and depth of data to be collected. The need for breadth and depth of data in understanding the 'Every Student, Every School' became evident in the pilot. Quantitative

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[1] This study relates only to Every Student, Every School initiative, not the overarching More Support for Students with Disabilities policy.

data was collected via an online survey with participants recruited from randomly selected school communities across New South Wales, including Principals, Class Teachers, Learning and Support Teachers/Coordinators and Parents. Working through the Principal of each school selected, a series of specifically designed surveys were allocated to participants in each group. One hundred and nine participants fully completed the survey. Qualitative data were collected via semi-structured interviews from seven self-nominated schools. The schools included four Primary Schools, two Secondary Schools and one School for Specific Purpose. Four schools were located in the Sydney metropolitan area, two in regional NSW and one school in rural NSW. Interviews were completed with seven Principals, nine Class Teachers, six Learning and Support Team Teachers and/or Coordinators and six Parents of students with additional learning and support needs. A total of twenty eight interviews were undertaken in the seven schools.

The study received ethics approval on 7 July, 2014 from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Sydney University, protocol number 2014/517. Approval was granted by the Department of Education and Communities through the State Education Research Applications Process (SERAP), approval number 2014057 on 18 July, 2014. Fieldwork was conducted between 2 September, 2014 and 23 October, 2014.

The study explored the perceived benefits of the 'Every Student, Every School' initiative from the perspectives of Principals, Class Teachers, Support Teachers and Parents of students with additional learning and support needs. Despite different perspectives and experiences of ESES the participants demonstrated goodwill towards the initiative and its underlying philosophy of inclusion. The participants identified the benefits of ESES to include:

- Greater flexibility
- Building capacity in schools
- Promoting student centred learning
- Benefitting the whole school community
- Increased staff training

- Encouraging partnerships with parents.

Whilst on the whole positive about the ESES initiatives philosophy of inclusion, participants considered a number of factors were impeding the implementation of the Every Student, Every School framework, including:

- Removal of regional support
- Resource limitations and the adoption of universal rather than needs based funding
- Limitations of professional development opportunities
- Limitations in information dissemination beyond Principals
- Variability in the ESES rollout

Data analysis suggests that the 'Every Student, Every School' initiative could be further enhanced by enacting future strategies in relation to:

- Resource allocation
- The role of Learning and Support staff
- Professional Development, particularly for classroom teachers
- The expertise of Schools for Specific Purposes
- Access to specialist regional support
- More effective partnership with parents, including information in relation to the Education Standards of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Providing access to a robust and meaningful education program for students with disability and additional learning and support needs on the same basis as their peers is mandated by the Disability Discrimination Act. The ESES initiative in NSW public schools is a positive step towards achieving this, however, there is clearly more work to be done. The engagement by schools with the initiative appears patchy, with widely varying knowledge and approaches. The impact of ESES initiative appears greatest in schools in which there is effective leadership in building culture and the establishment of effective systems or structures. The goal of changing classroom teaching practices should be a major focus of future

developments, particularly in relation to professional development support and enhancing the role of the Learning and Support Teacher.  Much greater focus is also required on establishing meaningful partnerships with parents.

A number of recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that schools have access to Learning and Support Teachers who are well trained, knowledgeable across areas and adequately employed to perform the roles and responsibilities of learning support within the school setting.
2. It is recommended that professional development in relation to the 'Every Student, Every School' initiative be revised in terms of content, mode of delivery and timeliness to encourage greater participation by school staff in NSW.
3. It is recommended that the projects undertaken by SSPs be widely publicised and available so that mainstream schools are aware of and can benefit from their expertise.
4. It is recommended that centralised specialist support be available to resource individual schools across the spectrum of learning and support needs evident in NSW schools.
5. It is recommended that DEC actively support the development of local and regional networks to facilitate professional development and information sharing.
6. It is recommended that further research be undertaken with parents of children with additional learning and support needs to identify appropriate partnership strategies.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report outlines an examination of the achievements of the 'Every student, Every School' (ESES) initiative which was introduced into NSW Public Schools in April 2012. The ESES program aims to find better ways of meeting the additional learning and support needs of every student, rather than focusing on the learning and support needs of students with a known disability. The ESES framework aims to diversify knowledge, resources and experience about disability rather than concentrating the specialist knowledge in Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs) (Department of Education and Communities, 2012).

Prior to the implementation of 'Every Student, Every School' students with additional learning and support needs received resources and services via Integration Support Funding. With the introduction ESES the funding mechanism changed and schools now receive funding for additional learning assistance and support based on school population figures.

The 'Every Student, Every School' framework is supported by the Commonwealth Governments' More Support for Students with Disability National Partnership which provided almost $48 million in 2012 and 2013 to support schools to meet the educational needs of students with disability (Department of Education and Communities, 2014).

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Receipt of an education is a right. Participation in education is by law a requirement for children and youth between the age of 5 and 17 years of age (unless enrolled in an approved alternate training program). Over the past 15 years, this right has been extended to all students – including those students with a disability or learning difficulty. For most students, this education program is received in the mainstream education setting.

The Australian Government posed the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians in 2008. Goal 1 states: "Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence". In working towards this goal, schools will:

• provide all students with access to high-quality schooling that is free from discrimination based on gender, language, sexual orientation, pregnancy, culture, ethnicity, religion, health or disability, socioeconomic background or geographic location;

• reduce the effect of other sources of disadvantage, such as disability, homelessness, refugee status and remoteness;

• promote personalised learning that aims to fulfil the diverse capabilities of each young Australian. (p. 7).

In 2011, the Australian Government furthered their commitment to achieve this goal by allocating funds for the initiative More Support for Students with Disabilities. This initiative was made available to all education sectors in Australia. The NSW Department of Education and Communities used this funding to implement a change in the way that students with disabilities and additional learning needs were supported in schools. This was enacted in the initiative 'Every Student, Every School' (ESES), involving a number of projects.

The primary project was provision to every school of a teacher who would act as a support to teachers to assist them to cater for students with additional learning needs. Every public school in NSW was provided with a staff allocation that would employ a teacher whose specific duty was to support classroom teachers to develop the professional knowledge that would allow them to deliver the optimum education program for students with additional learning needs. These teachers are known as Learning and Support Teachers (LAST).

The concept of the Learning and Support Teacher is strongly supported in the literature (Howell & Nolet, 2000; Gersten et al., 2008; Vanderheyden, 2011). It is envisaged that a teacher with holds the role of the LAST will have highly developed skills and knowledge in how to support students with additional learning and support needs (Brownell et al., 2010). They will also have well developed skills of collaboration to work with teachers in building

their capacity to support students in the classroom; they will also have refined skills in working and collaborating with parents, and outside agencies. A learning and support teachers may also assist schools implement a multi-tiered approach to identifying, addressing and evaluating support for students with additional learning needs (Ekstam, Linnanmaki, & Aunio, 2015; Hoover & Patton, 2008).

The role of the Learning and Support Teacher in the 'Every Student, Every School' initiative has resulted in dramatic changes in the way these teachers typically function in schools. They have gone from typically supporting students directly, to supporting class teachers to support students. That is, Learning and Support Teachers are now required to be highly skilled in a range of highly refined pedagogies, and to be skilled in working with colleagues, parents and outside agencies in a collaborative manner to deliver a personalised learning plan for target students.

This study aims to investigate the impact of the Every Student, Every School initiative. This study aims to establish the positive outcomes of this initiative, as well as highlight those features of the learning and support role that require further refinement, and how teachers can be assisted to further enhance the impact of their role.

## 1.2    RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODS

This section provides details of the research questions, methodology, the profile of participants and limitation of the study.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first aim of the study was to make recommendations on how the 'Every Student, Every School' initiative may be further refined to benefit students outcomes, teacher professional knowledge, and the capacity of schools to provide support. A second aim was to identify insights into possible improvements that could be made in the delivery of additional learning and support for students in NSW schools. This would provide valuable feedback to

the Department of Education and Communities, as well as assist the NSW Teachers Federation to tailoring professional learning to assist their members.

The research aimed to investigate two primary questions:

1. What do school principals, classroom teachers, support teachers and parents of a student with additional learning needs perceive to be the benefits of the Every Student, Every School initiative?

2. How do school principals, classroom teachers, support teachers and parents of a student with additional learning needs perceive the support process provided through Every Student, Every School initiative could be further enhanced?

## RESEARCH METHOD

A mixed methods approach was used (Bryman, 2008; Walter 2010) and the research was conducted in two parts. Part one involved completing an online quantitative survey and part two involved conducting qualitative, case study interviews. The decision to collect both quantitative and qualitative data arose from concerns raised during the pilot. Pilot participants provided strong feedback that one method of collecting data alone may lead to an incomplete picture of the experience of ESES. Qualitative data alone may capture only those schools where ESES was successfully being implemented. Likewise, quantitative data captured through random sample would not capture the nuanced implementation processes that underpin the success (or otherwise) of ESES. Accordingly, this study sought to elicit as complete as possible picture of the implementation of ESES in NSW schools.

## PART ONE: ONLINE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

*Participants*

In part one, the study recruited participants from across the school community, including School Principals, Parents, Class Teachers, Learning and Support Teachers and Coordinators. Participants were invited from randomly selected schools across the state. Principals were

sent a Participant Information Statement (PIS) outlining information about the overall study and asked to complete a Participant Consent Form (PCF) to be involved in the study. At this stage, they were also asked if they were willing to participate in both parts of the study (See Appendix 1 for study PIS and PCF).

*The study sample*

A random sample of public schools in New South Wales was drawn from the Department's website. The schools were divided into four types: Central/Community Schools, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Schools for Specific Purposes.

An initial random sample of Public Schools in NSW was drawn using a computerised random sample table. Variations to the sample were made to ensure adequate inclusion of school types with low overall numbers (Central/community schools and Schools for Specific Purposes). The final random sample included:

Central/community: 21 [representing 31 per cent of 67 schools]

Primary Schools: 497 [representing 32 per cent of 1567 schools]

Secondary Schools: 120 [representing 30 percent of 398 schools]

SSP: 39 [representing 35 per cent of 113 schools]

The research team sent recruitment emails to a total of 677 randomly selected potential participants and received a response from 53 schools. Follow up telephone calls were made to every school within the sample. We therefore had a response rate of 7.8 per cent for the complete sample. Overall, 110 survey responses were received from 53 schools:

3 received from Central Schools (response rate of 14%)

29 received from Primary Schools (response rate of 6%)

17 received from Secondary Schools (response rate of 14%)

4 received from SSP (response rate of 10%)

*Surveys*

Each participant was invited to complete an online Survey Monkey questionnaire. A survey was designed for each participant group (mainstream Principals, Class Teachers, Learning and Support Teachers/Coordinators and Parents, and to Principals, Teachers and Parents in Schools for Specific Purposes) totalling seven questionnaires. See Appendix 3 for a copy of each survey and Appendix 4 for copies of the Participant Information Statements.

The surveys addressed the following issues:

1. Previous experience of the Integration Support Funding model
2. Current experiences of the 'Every Student, Every School' initiative
3. Disability Discrimination Awareness
4. The future of provision for students with additional learning and support needs
5. Demographic questions.

A pilot study was conducted using four questionnaires for mainstream Principals, Class Teachers, Learning and Support Teachers/Coordinators and Parents. Following the pilot, the questionnaires were revised and three additional questionnaires developed for use in Schools of Specific Purposes. The final questionnaires were developed working in consultation with the University of Sydney and the NSW Teachers Federation and were also reviewed by an external firm of consultants (ARTD Consultants) with expertise in questionnaire construction.

## PART TWO: QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY INTERVIEWS

Part two of the study involved undertaking a series of case study interviews to gain more detailed information about experiences in schools of providing assistance to students with additional learning and support needs. We asked Principals to:

- Invite the Class Teacher, Learning and Support Teacher or Learning and Support Coordinator and Parent of the student identified in part one of the study to participate in an interview;
- Distribute an email from the research team to the people outlined above containing a Participant Information Statement and a Participant Consent Form;
- Identify a date and time convenient to conduct the interviews; and
- Sign a consent form acknowledging that the school was willing to participate in the qualitative interviews.

*Case study interviews*

Twenty eight interviews were undertaken in seven schools located in NSW. The schools in the qualitative sample included four Primary Schools, two Secondary Schools and one School for Specific Purpose. Four schools were located in the Sydney metropolitan area, two were in regional NSW and one school was located in rural NSW. Interviews were completed with seven Principals, nine Class Teachers, six Learning and Support Team Teachers/Coordinators and six Parents of students with additional learning and support needs.

*Procedure*

Schools randomly selected were provided with links to on-line surveys, following consent. These surveys were administered via Survey Monkey and analysis undertaken via SPSS.

Twenty seven of the twenty eight interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. One participant declined to consent to audio recording and hand written notes were made during the interview. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes with twenty five interviews undertaken face to face in schools and three interviews completed by telephone. All fieldwork was completed between 2 September, 2014 and 23 October, 2014.

The study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), University of Sydney – protocol number 2014/517. Approval was granted by the Department of Education

and Communities through the State Education Research Applications Process (SERAP), approval number 2014057 on 18 July, 2014.

The questionnaires in part one of the study were aggregated using an Excel spreadsheet and then loaded onto an SPSS database for descriptive statistical analysis. The semi-structured interviews conducted during part two of the research provided thick data on staff and parent perceptions and experiences of initiatives undertaken to support students with additional leaning and support needs in NSW public schools. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data from transcribed interviews was undertaken.

## PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

This section provides details of the demographic profile of the participants in this study, both those involved in the on-line survey and those interviewed.

*Survey respondents*

A total of 110 completed surveys were received. 80.2% of respondents were female. The respondents described their schools as having a predominantly English speaking student cohort (78%). Schools ranged in size from 25 or less through to over 900 students. 47% of respondents' schools had support classes on site for students with additional support and learning needs. Three Schools for Special Purposes participated in the survey, with responses received from two parents, two class room teachers and three principles. Responses were received from the following groups:

**Table 1: On-line survey respondents by category**

| Respondent | Responses | % |
|---|---|---|
| Principal | 46 | 41.8 |
| Learning and Support Teacher | 27 | 24.5 |
| Class room teacher | 21 | 19.1 |
| Parent | 16 | 14.5 |

Table 1 indicates that within our responses we have a range of perspectives on the ESES initiative, although Principals comprise the largest group. In small rural communities Principals indicated that they played multiple roles within the school, often including class room teacher. Respondents were on the whole very experienced, with only three indicating they had less than two years teaching experience. By comparison 45 indicated they had in excess of 20 years teaching experience. This indicates that among the respondents would have experienced a range of policies and approaches in relation to supporting students with additional learning and support needs.

**Table 2: On-line survey by school type**

| School type | Responses | % |
|---|---|---|
| Primary | 29 | 54.7 |
| Secondary | 17 | 32.0 |
| Central | 3 | 5.7 |
| SSP | 4 | 7.5 |

Table 2 reports school types, indicating that there is a slight overrepresentation of secondary schools and under-representation of primary schools.

**Table 3: On-line survey by school location**

| School location* | Responses | % |
|---|---|---|
| City | 7 | 21.9 |
| Regional | 11 | 34.4 |
| Rural | 15 | 43.8 |

*13 respondents did not answer this question

Table 3 reports the location of schools, indicating that there is an over-representation of rural schools within the respondents. Parent respondents however were more likely to come from the city.

Whilst the number of responses is quite small the composition of the respondents gives confidence in their ability to reflect a diverse range of experiences of the impact of ESES on schools and students.

*Interview participants*

Twenty eight interviews were undertaken in seven Public Schools located in New South Wales (NSW). The schools included four Primary Schools, two Secondary Schools and one School for Specific Purpose. Four schools were located in the Sydney metropolitan area, two were located in regional NSW and one school was located in rural NSW. Interviews were completed with seven Principals, nine Class Teachers, six Learning and Support Team Teachers and Coordinators and six Parents of students with additional learning and support needs.

Participants were asked at the end of each interview to complete a short questionnaire. This information has been used to describe the demographic variables of the twenty eight participants in the study.

Overall, twenty four women and four men participated in the study. The seven Principals represented schools ranging in size from 26 to 159 enrolments to over 900 enrolments. In four of these schools, Principals described the student population as predominantly English speaking and in the other three schools the student population was described as culturally and linguistically diverse. In the three culturally and linguistically diverse schools, the proportion of students from a non-English speaking background (NESB) included student populations with 21-30 per cent of students from NESB backgrounds, to 61-70 per cent and 71-80 per cent. The majority of Principals had over 20 years teaching experience which ranged from teaching in two to over ten schools. Of the mainstream schools included in the study, three schools had support classes on site and three schools had no support classes on site.

Seven women and two men comprised the Class Teacher sample interviewed in this study. Six of the Class Teachers were employed as permanent staff and three were employed on temporary contracts. Seven Class Teachers in the study were employed full time and two worked in part time positions. The sample covered a broad range of teaching experience, ranging from new graduates with one or two years teaching experience, to teachers with over 20 years' experience. This diversity was also reflected in the number of schools in

which Class Teachers had held positions with two teachers holding their current position, three teachers having held two positions, two teachers having held three positions and two teachers having held four to six positions.

Five women and one man were the participants in the Learning and Support Teachers (LAST) or Coordinators sample. Only five of the six participants completed the demographic information and some chose not to answer all questions. This means the information presented here is incomplete.

Five of the six LASTs were employed in permanent full time positons. Of the four who answered the question about teaching experience, one had been teaching 5-9 years, another had taught 10-14 years and two had been teaching for 15-19 years. Five participants answered the question in relation to the number of schools in which they had held teaching positions. One LAST had held one position only, one had held three positions and three had held four to six teaching positions.

Six women were interviewed who had children currently receiving additional learning and support at school. The age of their children ranged from seven years to 17 years and five students were males and one student was female. Of the six students, one was an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

## LIMITATIONS

There were a number of limitations experienced by the research team in conducting the study. More limitations were associated with conducting the quantitative survey, than with conducting the qualitative interviews.

*Limitations of the quantitative surveys:*

The initial response rate to the online survey was very low.  In order to increase the response rate, the research team used a range of different approaches, none of which were

successful on their own, but together resulted in a better response outcome. The range of options tried included:

- Sending initial reminder emails to participants in the random sample;
- Sending second reminder emails to participants in the random sample;
- Sending participants in the random sample, a letter from the NSW Teachers Federation outlining the importance of the survey;
- Promoting participation in the survey at The NSW Teachers Federation conference and a Sydney University Special Education conference;
- Attaching an email from Emeritus Professor Tony Vinson to emails accompany details of participation, and
- Ringing schools in the random sample, trying to speak to Principals, leaving messages, resending emails outlining information about the study and an explanation of how to be involved.

Some participants in the random sample supplied reasons for their inability to participate in the survey which included:

- Schools were already involved in other university studies and therefore had no additional time to be involved in this study;
- Some schools had participated in the statistical data trial for the Disability Discrimination Act;
- The research was being conducted at a busy time of year. The survey coincided with the Higher School Certificate trials and with end of year reporting and 2015 planning;
- Some School executives did not grant permission to be involved in the study;
- In smaller schools, the Principal had multiple roles and therefore experienced difficulties completing the surveys in relation to the variety of roles played;
- In some smaller schools, they did not have three students requiring additional learning and support and therefore declined the invitation to participate in the study;

- The process endorsed by the Sydney University Ethics Committee to limit bias in the sample was complicated, involving as it did, schools sending the names of three students receiving additional support, the research team choosing one student and then informing the school the name of the chosen student. The School then arranged for the staff and parent of the student to be involved.
- Some feedback that the questionnaires were long and involved; and
- There was some misunderstanding with the Schools for Specific Purpose (SSP). Since these schools did not implement the 'Every Student, Every School' initiative, many believed that the survey was not directed towards them. While a limited number of surveys were returned by SSP's this perhaps explains the low SSP response rate. When asked whether the survey was relevant for SSP's the research team explained our interest in understanding the implications for all schools of the changed funding arrangements. We also highlighted our interest in understanding in more depth, the special projects developed by Schools for Specific Purposes as part of the 'Every Student, Every School' initiative.

*Limitations of the qualitative interviews*

The research methodology relied on self-nomination by principals for their school to participate in the qualitative case study. Not surprisingly those principals with a strong knowledge and commitment to educational inclusion were more likely to nominate their schools to participate. In this way the qualitative case studies are unlikely to be representative of schools generally and caution needs to be exercised in interpreting the interviews.

The study required a commitment by the school and time commitment may have deterred some Principals from involvement in the study. In each location the research team aimed to interview four categories of participant: the Principal or an Executive Teacher and the Class Teacher, Learning and Support Teacher/Coordinator and Parent of a child with additional learning and support needs. While the sample included city, regional and rural Secondary Schools and Primary Schools, it did not contain any Central Schools. In one school, no parent was available for interview and in other schools; some staff were interviewed because of

their involvement with the child chosen by the research team. Some of the Class Teachers, for example, had limited experience and engagement with the older Integration Support Funding system, but had been requested by the Principal to participate in the study. This may have impacted on the quality and depth of information obtained in relation to the older system and for new teachers, in relation to their understanding of the current 'Every Student, Every School' initiative.

## 2.    KEY FINDINGS

This section reports the key findings from the study, drawing on both the qualitative and quantitative data. The findings are reported in three sections: participants' experiences prior to ESES; participants' experiences of ESES; and the limitations and challenges of ESES. The qualitative and quantitative findings are presented together in an effort to provide a more nuanced understanding of the participants' experiences and opinions.

### 2.1 EXPERIENCE PRE-ESES

The study provided an opportunity to compare different policy approaches to supporting children with additional learning and support needs in NSW Schools. This section details participants' experiences prior to April, 2012. Most participants were well placed to make this comparison, having been involved in the school system over this period.

Prior to the introduction of 'Every Student, Every School' in April 2012, schools received Integration Support Funding for eligible students with 'low level' need of up to $6,400 as well as funding support for students with diagnosed disabilities (which has been unaffected by the changed policy). Participants in the study were asked to discuss their impressions and experiences of the previous funding model before moving on to discuss their perceptions of the 'Every Student, Every School' initiative.

### CAPACITY OF THE SCHOOL TO MEET NEEDS

Table 5 below reports the level of confidence of school staff in meeting the needs of students with additional learning and support needs prior to ESES.

**Table 4: Confidence with the ability of the School to meet needs of students PRIOR to ESES**

| Respondent | Not at all confident % | Low confidence % | Confident % | Very confident % | Don't know % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Classroom teacher | | 25 | 58.3 | 8.3 | 8.3 |
| LAST | | 18.5 | 44.4 | 29.6 | 7.4 |
| Principal | 2.7 | 27 | 48.6 | 18.9 | 2.7 |

The Table above reveals that Principals expressed the lowest level of confidence in the capacity of the school to meet the needs of students with additional learning and support needs prior to the introduction of the ESES funding model. The LAST respondents expressed the highest level of confidence (29.6%) in the ability of the school, although this still is less than 1 in 3 responses. One quarter of classroom teacher respondents indicated they had 'low confidence' and only 8.3% were very confident suggesting that many were struggling in the context of these resources to meet student needs.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate which of the following additional supports were available in their school prior to 2012. The Table below indicates responses from classroom teachers and parents as those best placed to know what services were actually provided in the classroom.

**Table 5: Parent and Classroom Teacher on-line survey responses by support provided prior to ESES**

| | Parent % | Class room teacher % |
|---|---|---|
| Help with literacy | 85.7 | 75 |
| Help with numeracy | 71.4 | 36.7 |
| Help with behaviour | 28.6 | Not asked |
| Help with communication | 14.3 | 60 |
| Hearing support services | 14.3 | 45.5 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Vision support services | 14.3 | 40 |
| Additional classroom teacher support | 71.4 | 50 |
| Additional support from the Learning and Support Teacher (LAST) | 85.7 | 72.7 |
| Additional support from the Learning and Support Officer (SLSO) | 71.4 | 50 |
| Parent support | 42.9 | 55.6 |

Assistance with literacy and the support of the LAST in the classroom were most often noted by parents and classroom teachers. Only half of classroom teachers indicated they received additional support in the classroom or from the SLSO.

A small number of respondents also indicated that students received support from non-DEC services in relation to speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and hydrotherapy.  These types of services are very difficult to access in the public system, with extensive waiting lists being common. Private providers are often expensive and in short supply in non-metropolitan areas, according to participants in the interviews.

## REGIONAL SUPPORT

Prior to 2012 the availability of specialist regional support was perceived by participants interviewed as being very important. Principals and Learning and Support Teachers especially, valued the ability of knowing who to contact in the regional office about which issues in relation to students with additional learning and support needs. They also valued the specialist teachers who were able to visit schools and provide additional assistance to students needing learning support. These positive aspects of regional support are highlighted in the range of comments outlined below:

*Well it was quite different, because the major difference is that schools were able to refer out for assistance. So, within the districts there was a dedicated autism specialist teacher, there were dedicated behaviour assistance teachers, there were dedicated integration teachers. And there was a learning support centre…and students could be referred to that centre and then they went out and worked with students individually in their schools.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, City area)

*I think it worked really well before Every School Every Student having specialists for behaviour and for learning support from district learning support as well coming in.  I liked that system.*  (Class Teacher, Primary School, City area)

The regional assistance also covered supplying teachers with teaching strategies to use in the classroom and the provision of external resources, for example, referrals to agencies for additional information and support.

*I had a Down Syndrome girl and I'd never had that before a few years ago and that really made me aware of, you know, agencies and ways of getting help because that was a huge undertaking…but I had a wonderful learning support teacher up here at [location] and I was in contact with her and she came down and she really helped me differentiate the curriculum for her but if I hadn't have had that help and that support I would have found it very difficult.* (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

The access to regional support was seen as particularly important in rural areas. The contact was seen as beneficial both in terms of helping with additional support services, advice and sometimes even additional funding.

*Used them a lot, used a lot of extra support services if we could get hold of them. Some of them were terrific, really difficult to get hold of, but you did have access to behaviour support, learning support, consultants…  But yes, access was always an*

*issue, the more remote you were the harder it was to access support.* (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

The survey respondents were asked 'how satisfied' they were about the support provided to classroom teachers in terms of supporting students with additional needs prior to 2013. The data suggests a general satisfaction although there was also significant dissatisfaction expressed by respondents. The lack of a clear cut endorsement or rejection of the pre-ESES arrangements was also reflected in the interviews.

**Table 6: Degree of satisfaction with support provided to *teachers* pre-ESES (%)**

| Respondent | Dissatisfied | Mostly dissatisfied | Mostly satisfied | Satisfied | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principal | 5.4 | 37.8 | 37.8 | 13.5 | 5.4 |
| Classroom teacher | 0 | 16.7 | 58.3 | 16.7 | 8.3 |
| LAST | 7.4 | 18.5 | 33.3 | 37 | 3.7 |

It would seem likely that some of this dissatisfaction arose from the variability in the 'expertise' of the experts prior to 2012. While some Principals perceived the regional support provided at that time as positive, others believed the support was not of a high standard or quality. It was also reported that there were problems experienced in accessing members of the regional support team and gaining a commitment from them to visit your school.

*…so what happened is when we had students that needed additional support, then what would happen is you might have someone come out and help you, that was a consultant, and quite frankly the level of support was not at a high standard… Yeah we needed more, we needed someone practically to come up with some strategies that would engage, which would resolve not just a bit of advice and then walk away and still expect us to manage it all. It was an absolute waste of time, and I know that I certainly felt that a lot of these - and I'm not trying to be mean to people whose job it was, but basically they were being, using up a lot of their time driving around doing very little.* (Principal, Secondary School, City area)

Consultants were called upon to undertake assessments of students with additional learning and support needs. The downside of this approach was that they made an assessment over a short period of time and were gone when the teacher sought to apply their ideas or interventions.

> *I guess one limitation would probably be that they only saw the child for a small amount of time. So it was a small amount of time that they spent with the child which can make it hard for them to know exactly- like they'll give you guidance in how to treat it and how to address it the classroom but in the end, they're not having to deal with it.* (Class Teacher, Primary School, City area)

## FUNDING FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

There were a number of aspects of the previous funding model which were described as beneficial. It must be stressed however, that the previous funding model was heavily individually based and therefore the focus of provision was on individual children with additional learning and support needs. Although the funding mechanism was often experienced as complicated and bureaucratic, funding was perceived as wider ranging for lower level need and so schools could attract ongoing funding for students.

> *Another strength prior to 2012 is that language and learning, language disabilities and autism I think were better supported…because you could actually apply for additional support for low-level autism.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

The funding model also afforded schools and parents high levels of support which meant that schools could plan longer term interventions for their students as highlighted below:

> *A targeted approach meant we had an assurance of resourcing both financial and personnel resourcing, so that you could plan long-term interventions if you needed to, and if you had access to the resources that made it possible. And in rural areas that was always difficult. The other thing is that the parents had a feeling of being*

*supported right from the start… So in that sense, that assurance of appropriate resourcing was a big plus. It also meant that you spent time and effort on training people, so you'd train your teaching staff and your support staff, to support particular students or particular programs.* (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

The previous funding was tied to a particular child which was interpreted as being beneficial for individual students who received targeted support as outlined here:

*I suppose, more case – if it was something you could put a label on – you know, that was the thing. I remember I had a child about two years ago. So it would have been 2012. Because he was autistic, so because he was identified, he got teacher's aide support like three days a week* (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

The strength of the previous model was that the guidelines were clear in terms of how funding was allocated for use with a particular student:

*I suppose well certain students were coming through with a certain monetary figure weren't they, and that money had to be resourced or be spent on that particular student. So you could almost be guaranteed if the school was being accountable, they could almost make sure that every dollar was spent on that particular student.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Secondary School, City area)

While there were benefits for the child who attracted the integration funding in the form of more specialist attention, it was however, very targeted and only beneficial to a limited number of students:

*I believe that having the funding set to a specific student and employing somebody with integration, I think that specifically for that one student, it was beneficial because it was targeted more at them…However I do think, in some respects, it was beneficial but I think it was beneficial for a limited number of students. It wasn't sort*

*of whole school approach.* (Learning and Support Coordinator, Primary School, City area)

Some schools reported using the targeted funding to help a number of students, although this led to reported tensions in some schools where funds were used exclusively by the student who 'owned' the funding:

*And people got a bit upset if you started to mix that formula.  If there was another child in the class who also had some needs, and you split the support between the two of them, people would say 'oh no that's Matthew's support time'.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

The survey revealed a degree of dissatisfaction about the support provided to students prior to the ESES initiative. Significantly, over 40% of Principals expressed a level of dissatisfaction with the support provided, the highest of any of the respondents. Parents were mostly satisfied, although a number were dissatisfied or unsure.

**Table 7: Degree of satisfaction with support provided to *students* pre-ESES (%)**

| Respondent | Dissatisfied | Mostly dissatisfied | Mostly satisfied | Satisfied | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents | 14.2 | | 28.5 | 42.8 | 14.2 |
| Principal | 5.4 | 37.8 | 37.8 | 13.5 | 5.4 |
| Classroom teacher | | 16.7 | 58.3 | 16.7 | 8.3 |
| LAST | 7.4 | 18.5 | 33.3 | 37 | 3.7 |

A number of participants described the Integration Support Funding process as detailed and *was pretty convoluted; we had to go through a lot of paperwork* (Principal, Primary School, City area).  Schools were also required to reapply regularly for the integration funding which was seen as time consuming and sometimes 'illogical'. There was a degree of cynicism about the bureaucratic nature of the former process, including this comment from a classroom teacher:

*I suppose – you had a kid who was in the box of diagnosis, then you were laughing.*
(Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

Parents dissatisfaction were expressed in the open-ended responses on the survey, with comments included

*The services were good when received but there were often long delays in starting and they went for a limited duration*

*It was continually stated that he was not bad enough when compared to other students getting support even though I had been getting learning support privately because it was not available in the school. Had he been in a different school, he would have been deemed to need support. Finally in year 6 when the principal read his report, was support initiated. Better late than never.*

While funding was allocated to a particular student, some in the study felt that the money was not necessarily always spent efficiently or effectively. The prior model of funding required parents and children to accept a 'label' of disability which some resisted due to the stigma that was also attached. The suggestion made by one LAST for example, was that the funds could have been used more effectively in a range of different ways.

*Some of these students actually didn't need any help at all in terms of where the money could be spent. So the money can only be used for staffing and resourcing, and some of these students would come to us and they would refuse to have any extra support to be seated around. They didn't want an SLSO, the only way we could spend that money is on [staffing]* (Learning and Support Teacher, Secondary School, City area)

## SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS FALLING THROUGH THE GAPS

Prior to 2012, some participants thought there was inadequate funding for learning support time. While the school population had changed, funding had not kept up with the changes in the student population. There was the feeling that as a result, some students missed out on necessary learning support at the time when Integration Support Funding was the model used.

> *In the school we had inadequate learning support time, because it had been based on, it was this is how far it goes back, it had been based on ELLA results, not even NAPLAN results, from some years before, and the literacy needs in schools had increased… I'm talking about all the kids that missed out because you didn't have enough learning support in the school, and never ever picked up funding.* (Principal, Secondary School, City area)

Over time, it became increasingly more difficult to obtain funding under the old system:

> *Well, every year they made the bar higher and higher and higher. Right…so more and more difficult to get the money.* (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

While participants spoke of the merits of individual funding, they also highlighted the negative aspects of this approach.  The most difficult aspect of the individual funding, was for the children who did not qualify for a diagnosis and yet whose difficulties were pronounced and who required additional attention in the classroom.

> *Then you've got other kids who might have – not as able to cope in class as him, who would be falling in the gaps.  You know, not specifically diagnosed with anything, who wouldn't get any funding.* (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

The process of getting funding in rural areas was especially difficult for students who were undiagnosed. In one example given in a rural location, there were difficulties described in obtaining a diagnosis in terms of accessing professional help and getting transport to appointments.

> *The other issue is that sometimes it was bloody hard to get funding for kids who should have had it, if the parents didn't go out and get the diagnosis. And again, my experience was in rural schools, and for people of low socioeconomic, or educational status, number one trying to talk to them about what we were seeing in the school, which they had grown used to over time, and then saying it was urgent that they seek a diagnosis for their child to get the support that you needed for them, was sometimes extremely difficult. Especially, like I said, in rural schools if you were a parent in [a rural area] with a child with ADHD, trying to get to [larger town] to an appointment, with a special paediatrician, was a massive exercise… And sometimes we used to get teaching staff members to drive families to the appointment because there was no transport. So those were real difficulties.* (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

An additional issue with the Integration Support Funding model was that because the funding allocation was attached to a particular student, if the student left the school, the funding was no longer available. This situation had implications and repercussions on staffing, the type of programs the school could provide and the provision of services to other students who may have been benefitting from the resources provided to the student who left the school.

> *It followed the student, so if for instance you had two full-time school learning support officers employed, and a student with a large component of funding, or sometimes it was a family and two students left with that funding support, you lost your staffing allocation for that in school learning support officer.* (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

*…But the school would try to eke out as much as they could so that – there was a teacher's aide working with child X who's got the funding. Child Y doesn't have the funding. We'd try and match them up so that they would get some of the assistance, as well.* (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

Also described in relation to the previous funding process, was the uncertainty surrounding whether a student would or would not receive funding and if and when the funding would start:

*It seemed like you never – you were up in the air for large parts of the year. Also, with new kids who come in who've got significant problems? You've got this lag. You might have a whole term where you've got nothing for this child. No matter how extreme the child is.* (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

## SUPPORTING CLASSROOM LEARNING

The primary method of intervention under the Integration Support Funding was seen as withdrawing students from class. While this may have been of benefit to some students, many participants in the study recognised that it is not the only method, and not always the best method, of working with students requiring additional learning support.

*It isn't about withdrawing kids from class, and the model's been ever since I've been in learning, I mean in schools there were heaps of learning support teachers that just used a withdrawal model.* (Principal, Secondary School, City area)

The perception among many participants was that Teachers Aides in schools under the previous model were not adequately trained and skilled. The belief was that while teachers were trained in reading recovery, opportunities for training non-teaching staff was were not well targeted or available:

*And often resources in schools prior to 2012 did not have special education training, it was up to schools often to identify who would be their learning support teacher.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

The belief was also expressed that teachers had limited training opportunities in relation to teaching students with additional learning needs at this time, as expressed by a Learning and Support Coordinator:

> *The training that we would have had was basically, you would find your own professional learning opportunities. On the odd occasion we would have a staff meeting or something that was collaborative at the school but generally, it was sort of left a little bit more up to the teacher.* (Learning and Support Coordinator, Primary School, City location)

As mentioned previously, one of the aims of the ESES initiative was to facilitate cultural change within schools in accordance with the DDA. The lack of a 'whole of school' responsibility for enabling participation and engagement was noted as another limitation identified with the Integration Support Funding model. Prior to 2012 many participants felt there were expectations by school staff that the learning team would 'fix and sort out' everything as highlighted by the comments below:

> *…and the other thing is the culture and classroom teachers expectations of the learning support team…what I'm trying to say is there was a kind of culture, not by-- and it's a very general statement, that I put in my learning support team referral and the STLA, which it was called back then, will come and do a program for me and withdraw and that will be it…, staff did fill out a learning support team referral, as they do now, but I feel it was still that culture "I've filled out my learning support team" and please state this is a very generalised statement, but there still is that culture that the ISTB teacher, the itinerant support teacher for behaviour will come in and fix this part, or "The STLA teacher will do me a program and that's their responsibility" I guess I think prior to Every Student Every School, I think the amount of building capacity amongst staff wasn't as strong.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

Since the Learning and Support Team was seen as providing the solution to the issue, this left little reason for school staff to take ownership of strategies to support students with additional learning needs. As highlighted below, this led to a situation where the whole school rarely benefitted and strategies tended to be short term, rather than focusing on whole school development and improvement.

> *I suppose the weaknesses were, it was probably all aimed at that student and that teacher, so there was no whole school improvement, or systems improvement, it was all about in the now. If you have an autistic child in your class this year you got some professional learning, but if you didn't have one next year you probably didn't get anything. So it was a fairly short term kind of strategy, you're really just catering for that student as they move through your school.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

Although assistance was previously available on a regional level, there was felt to be limited scope for capacity building in schools under the Integration Support Funding model:

> *The older model…a lot of withdrawal so basically sometimes that expertise skills wasn't being shared with the classroom teacher, so building up their capacities.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Secondary School, City area)

## 2.2 CURRENT EXPERIENCES OF 'EVERY STUDENT, EVERY SCHOOL' (ESES)

This section reports findings from the study in relation to the implementation and effectiveness of the ESES initiative in schools from a range of perspectives.

### A CULTURAL OF INCLUSION?

A key aim of the ESES strategy was to facilitate cultural change within public schools in NSW, in accordance with the Education Standards of the Discrimination Disability Act. There were varying levels of knowledge about the Disability Discrimination Act and its impact on teaching students with additional learning and support needs. Some in the study had a comprehensive knowledge as outlined below, while others had limited knowledge of the legislation.

> *Basically the Act it's our role, our duty, our responsibility to cater for every student and it's negligent on our part if we don't…we have to educate, basically it's our role to educate them and provide the best possible program so that they're not disadvantaged and they have exactly the same opportunities as the person that doesn't have disabilities. (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)*

Achieving an inclusive culture within schools, whilst a worthwhile goal, needs to be placed in the broader context of Australian society accordingly to some participants:

> *Yes, I still find that. There are still people who see the label as a stigma. There are staff who see the label as a stigma. And I don't think that that's something that's going to change particularly rapidly. It's a cultural thing in Australia, difference is not applauded.* (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

The framework was best understood by Principals and Learning and Support Teachers  who showed a good understanding of the ESES initiative, especially the elements of the framework which  deal with capacity building in schools and the ability to help all students:

*It's trying to upskill the capabilities of classroom teachers and individual schools to support students with, not low level, but less than the massive overt behaviours and disabilities, so that you're actually building capacity at school level, rather than outsourcing for a lot of things.  So for instance at this school we've had a group from the learning support team do the functional behaviour assessment training, so we've upskilled three members of staff who are now training the whole staff in the bare minimum that a classroom teacher needs, but the expertise is now in the school.* (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

*But it should be a document that feeds, I think, into the programming and into the learning just so that teachers know that they are responsible for the learning of each student no matter what their capabilities are and that every student has the ability to learn.  But, I think, it should drive a lot of the programs and a lot of the teaching processes the way that we develop and sort of initiate those lessons.* (Learning and Support Coordinator, Primary School, City area)

Some Class Teachers in the sample struggled to articulate their understanding of the ESES policy while others understood well the philosophy of the approach. Both these views are described below:

*To be honest I don't remember having any specific training outside of school or inside of school. I guess that there was notification.  When the change happened, when all of those teams were disbanded and they were put back in the school, we were notified why that was happening*. (Class Teacher, Primary School, City area)

*…every student should be given the opportunity to excel… It's just really taking the time to learn what works well, what doesn't work well and obviously increase what works well and decrease what doesn't work well. But giving every student the*

*opportunity to achieve their potential is the main thing, and that's across all students that have got disabilities or are at a bit of a disadvantage.* (Class Teacher, Secondary School, City area)

There was some cynicism among participants about whether the drive for inclusion was genuine or driven by budgetary considerations. The following participant in the study o perceived that saving money and resources was at the heart of the ESES policy change.

*I know that the department had a limited resource and I know the rhetoric behind, the theory behind, I think. So in order to be more responsive to schools at need without having to increase the funding because there was no money they pooled all the STLA allocations back into the bucket and they also pulled out a lot of the support teachers that had been placed regionally like the language support teachers or the behaviour support teachers.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

Whilst the stated goal of ESES was inclusion a number of participants pointed to situations in which the result was further exclusion of students. There was a perception that concurrent to the introduction of ESES the guidelines for integration funding for support for children with high support needs had been tightened. Additionally, the new funding arrangement resulted in 'low need' children losing funding allocations. Parents also expressed concern about the impact of budget pressures on supporting their children's learning.

*Some of the Asperger's syndrome kids who would in the past have attracted funding, now fall below the cut off. But there hasn't been a commensurate increase in this flexible funding support.* (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

*Realistic budgets of funding needed for students & their school. I am aware of other parents (with children of special needs) who have received less funding as their child has gotten older but their child's needs are still the same however the funding criteria having changed yearly after making it more difficult to access funding as I quote from the parent "a computer analysis decides how much my child/school receives in*

*funding assistance for learning". My experience so far with this additional learning support and funding has been positive so far, but I am dubious of the Education Departments ability to maintain learning support without its constant pressure of financial budget control. I understand money can't be just given away frivolously but giving a child assistance in the classroom is priceless.* (Parent, on-line response)

Initially with the introduction of ESES there was also some concern about the impact of the initiative on job security:

*And with the implementation of Every Student Every School model, there was a lot of angst about how it was going to be embedded, how the change was going to take place on how support was going to be delivered. So there was a little bit of angst in that first year.* (Learning and Support Coordinator, Primary Schools, Regional area)

There was also some concern about the rapid nature of the change being implemented within schools. One Principal noted:

*I think the unfortunate thing about Every Student, Every School is that it became subsumed by the general restructuring of the department in that I think people don't really know where you can access support any more or professional learning; we feel like we're in a bit of a bubble at the moment.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

Participants also highlighted the challenges created by increasing numbers of students with additional learning and support needs and that some conditions, like student mental health issues, are also rising. The increasing population of students requiring additional help, was seen as impacting on the quality of teaching within mainstream classrooms:

*But as far as kids with special needs, I mean, I've had Aspergers, autistic kids, OCD, ADHD, emotional problems, behaviour problems.  So a whole big range.  They're becoming more and more prevalent in our classrooms.  We have to learn to – how to cope with them*.  (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area).

*We've always had students with disabilities and with extra needs in the classroom. It just becomes more and more at this stage… and I just find it's going to be very, very difficult the more students that we get with disabilities.* (Learning and Support Coordinator, Primary Schools, City area)

The perception of increasing numbers of students in public schools requiring additional support is borne out by publically available statistics.

## WHAT ESES LOOKS LIKE IN SCHOOLS

The interviews and on-line survey provided an opportunity for schools to describe how they are implementing ESES in their schools. The on-line survey responses from principals highlighted the diversity of uses of the funds provided under ESES, although most examples focused on the provision of staff resources and improved structures (such as learning and support teams). Most respondents described multi-pronged approaches to better supporting students with additional learning and support needs, often tailored to the local context. The role of the LAST was specifically mentioned in relation to working with students and building the capacity of class room teachers in 14 of the 33 open-ended responses.

*Two full time learning and support teachers and four full time learning and support SLSOs provide both in class and withdrawal support. The resources available have significantly increased since the implementation of ESES. Teachers are also provided with additional support to modify and adjust their teaching programs, resources and pedagogies. A dynamic and widely representative expert learning and support team assesses the needs of students and allocates resources. Teacher and parents have the opportunity to make referrals which can be considered by the LST. We have also engaged additional support through a community liaison officer to engage with our aboriginal community and this has proved invaluable in tapping into community resources.*

*We have a designated learning room which is designed to cater for a vast range of needs that students may have. Students are given intensive help with literacy or assistance with assessment tasks. Plans are available on Sentral and all information including NAPLAN results are on their profile pages. Students have SLO support available in the classroom and teachers are offered help in differentiation. Staff meetings are designed around Professional Development supporting the school plan which has ILNNP and ESES as significant parts.*

*At our school there is a full time LaST teacher that works with teachers to build capacity offering strategies to enhance their skills in dealing with students with additional needs. The part time LaST teacher works supporting students with individual learning needs. The Learning Support Team meets and prioritises caseloads for support personnel within the school. School Learning Support Officers work with students and teachers in the classroom and programme. The LST Coordinator and the LaST work in conjunction with outside agencies.*

The survey asked respondents to rate their level of confidence in their schools ability to meet the need of student. Whilst the introduction of ESES increased all school respondents' confidence the change was surprisingly small suggesting the need for more work.

**Table 8: Not confident about the ability of the School to meet needs of students (%)**

| Respondent | Classroom teachers | LAST | Principal |
|---|---|---|---|
| Prior to ESES | 25 | 19 | 30 |
| After ESES | 20 | 8 | 21 |

## INITIAL ROLL-OUT OF ESES

As mentioned previously, the introduction of ESES in public schools in NSW marked an important shift in the support provided to students with additional learning and support

needs. Key to a successful roll-out of new policy is the information and training provided to those affected by the policy shift. The study found marked differences between participants in their access to information and training in relation to ESES. Principals and Learning and Support Teachers/Coordinators displayed more detailed knowledge of the initiative compared to Class Teachers and Parents. This is not surprising given the 'top down' process for information dissemination adopted by the Department of Education and Communities. Remembering the focus of ESES on classroom teachers the on-line survey explored levels of awareness among participants. Figure 1 below illustrates awareness among classroom teachers and parents. Interestingly, Figure 1 below indicates that parents who responded to the survey had higher levels of confidence about their awareness of the opportunities available for learning support in schools then classroom teachers. This may reflect the role of parents in advocating for their children and their efforts to access as many resources as possible to support their education.

**Figure 1: Parental and classroom teachers awareness of ESES**
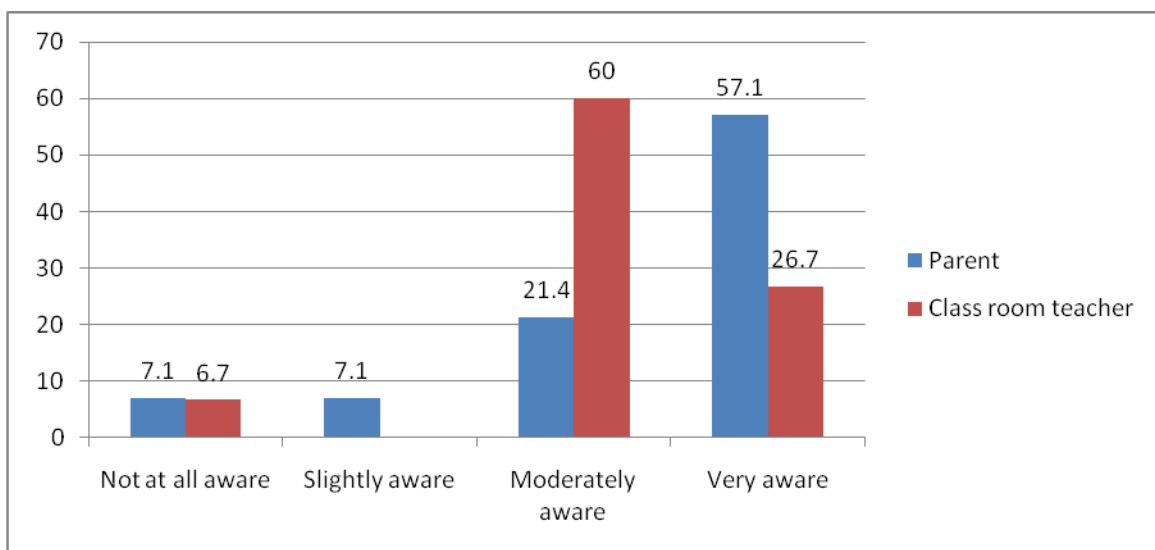


Nearly three-quarters of classroom teachers indicated some ambivalence about their awareness of ESES. This data suggests that one of the key strategies of ESES, building the capacity of classroom teachers, requires further attention. It is of concern that some two years after the introduction of the ESES initiative 60% of classroom teacher respondents felt they were only 'moderately aware' of the initiative.

The results from the on-line survey indicate quite diverse experiences in accessing training in relation to the ESES changes and its approach to supporting students with additional learning and support needs. Not surprisingly, LASTs respondents indicated that they had access to the greatest range of training opportunities. Nearly all LASTs had completed the DEC on-line resources as well as in-service training. 73% of LASTs also indicated they had access other on-line resources, suggesting that they are actively seeking other supports to assist them in their work. Given the focus on classroom teachers in embedding ESES in their teaching practices access to resources and professional development is very important. 60% of classroom teacher respondents had completed the DEC on-line resources, however, other on-line resources (7%) and in-service training (20%) was accessed by few. Principals played an important role in providing information and training for staff. For classroom teachers both the Principal (68%) and the LASTs (58%) provided training and information about ESES. The training and support provided by Schools for Specific Purposes was accessed by nearly one-third of LAST respondents but rarely by either class room teachers or principals. Among the Principals DEC was the main avenue for training and information about ESES, although there were a qualitative difference in relation to how this was experienced. For approximately one third the training was described as an 'initial briefing' only, with some indicating they had received no training at all.

**Figure 2: Training received in relation to ESES changes***
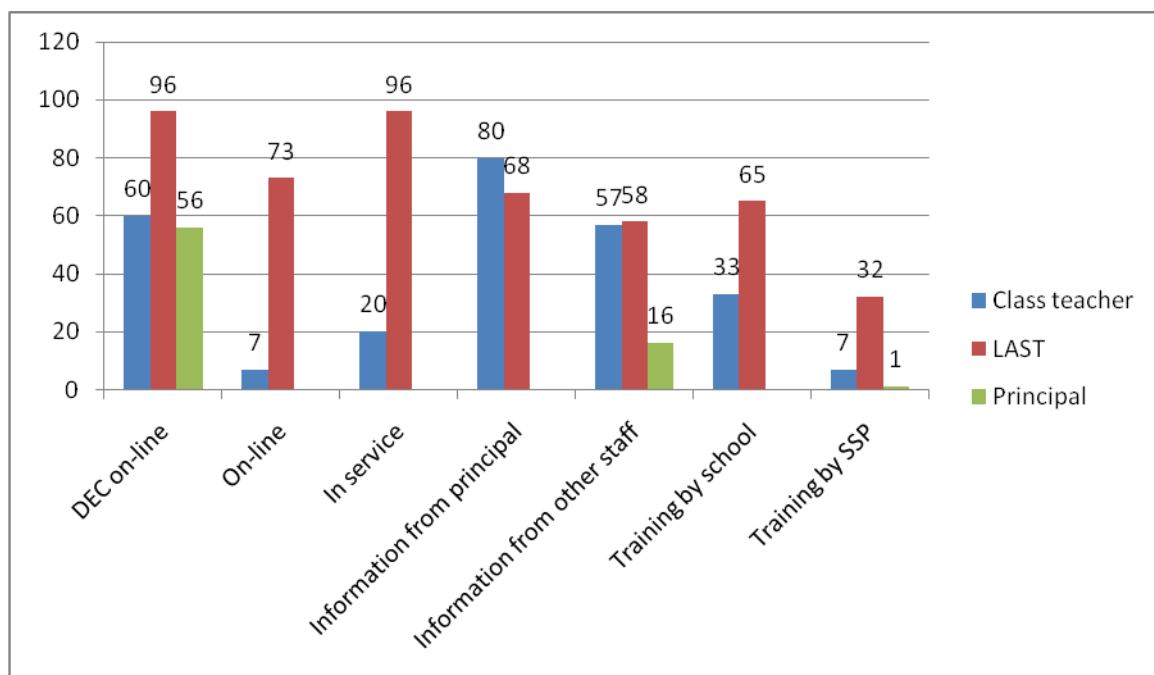
Those Principals interviewed indicated that information from the DEC had been received in the form of PowerPoint slides which the most Principals had shown to staff. The roll out of information regarding ESES seems to have occurred differently in geographical locations. In some areas, in addition to the PowerPoint materials, there were also network meetings held which provided relevant information about the ESES strategy and some Learning and Support Teachers spoke of attending courses to upskill them about the new initiative. Information was also reported as being provided via the training which occurred with the introduction of the National Disability Legislation and Standards.

> *There's a number of PowerPoints that we were given to take our staff through and I do remember briefing my staff on them.  But I know that when I talked to X [teacher's name] about this he said what's Every Student, Every School?  And I went hmmm maybe I didn't spend enough time briefing you about it.  I said oh don't worry just do your best*. (Principal, Primary School, City area)

> *…our first development day in 2013 was all around the Every School, Every Student, I know it did come through, I think they send through a power point of delivering it to - you know, disability and discrimination act means, what the standards - the disability standards for education, and we delivered that to whole staff, the other deputy did, term one, 2013. So that came through, that came through, and she used that information to be able to write a session up to deliver to staff. That was the - that was kind of the first thing that was done to the whole staff in relation to Every School, Every Student.* (Deputy Principal, Secondary School, City area)

## THE ESES PROCESS AND STRUCTURES

> *I think there's more acceptance that it is an in-class – that the responsibility for the student's progress remains with the class teacher to the major extent, with*

*appropriate support structures. But I think that's nearly accepted, nearly…there has to be clear evidence in the program that there has been provision made for special support needs in classrooms*. (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

In schools which had previously had a functioning Learning and Support Team, the introduction of the ESES framework made little difference to the process whereby students with additional learning needs received support. For the majority schools in the study sample this was the case and they used a team approach to determining the most appropriate strategies to use with students in order to improve student outcomes:

*At our school we still target children the same way, so a teacher puts a learning support team referral in that then goes to the learning support team. We ask the teacher to come to the meeting, it's discussed and then it's prioritised and as a team we decide what is the best thing for that child.* (Deputy Principal, Primary School, City area)

*We'll discuss the referral as a whole team and then decide as a team what the next course of action would be. So that may be a counsellor referral to go home, it could be myself going into the class, if it's a behaviour thing, to do some functional behaviour assessment observations and start that process* (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

For some teachers, the introduction of the ESES framework changed very little in relation to what they do in the classroom. For others it seemed that they really only saw it in relation to students with significant difficulties, rather than the ESES initiative helping any students with additional learning and support needs in the classroom. As a key plank of the initiative the capacity building of classroom teachers to date appears inadequate.

*So I guess pre-2012 and post, I'm not doing anything differently.* (Class Teacher, Secondary School, City area)

In one school in the sample, the ESES funding had been used to reduce class sizes rather than fund a Learning and Support position, although the need for such a role had since been recognised. There was therefore scope in this school for the development of a better process for recognising and supporting students with additional needs as per the philosophy of the ESES initiative.

Although the process of referral was described as the same or similar within schools since the introduction of the ESES process, the responsibility for the process seems to have shifted as explained during this study. Whereas the School Learning and Support Officer (SLSO) may have been seen as responsible for helping the student with additional needs outside the classroom in the past, the ESES process focusses much more on the classroom teachers taking responsibility for all students in the class, including those students with additional needs. Thus as a result of the changed funding emphasis, there was the feeling that individual teachers needed to become more self-reliant and responsible for all the children in their classroom and that students with additional needs were part of their daily responsibility and they were required to made adjustments and changes to meet their needs. This was interpreted as a change in the educational process from the teacher's perspective:

> *…and now we're starting to put into place the fact that the teachers need to understand that they are more responsible now and that it is up to them to be able to come up with the PLPs, OPs, for instance.  Whatever you call them and then start to work on adjustments and things in the classroom rather than coming to Learning and Support straight away as a first step, initial step.  So we are looking at trying to implement that a little bit more and a little bit more training but we don't have any training, at this stage*.  (Learning and Support Coordinator, Primary School, City area)

The on-line survey also explored the issue of decision making. The Figure below shows that involvement in decision making varied between parents, class room teachers and LASTs. The LASTs were most involved in decision making, which is not at all surprising although parental involvement was less clear. It is of concern that over 10% of class room teachers responded that they were not at all involved in decision making about additional supports provided to

students in their classrooms. This would suggest there is some room for improvement in the processes to ensure inclusion of classroom teachers in decision making.

**Figure 3: Involvement in decision making by respondent type**
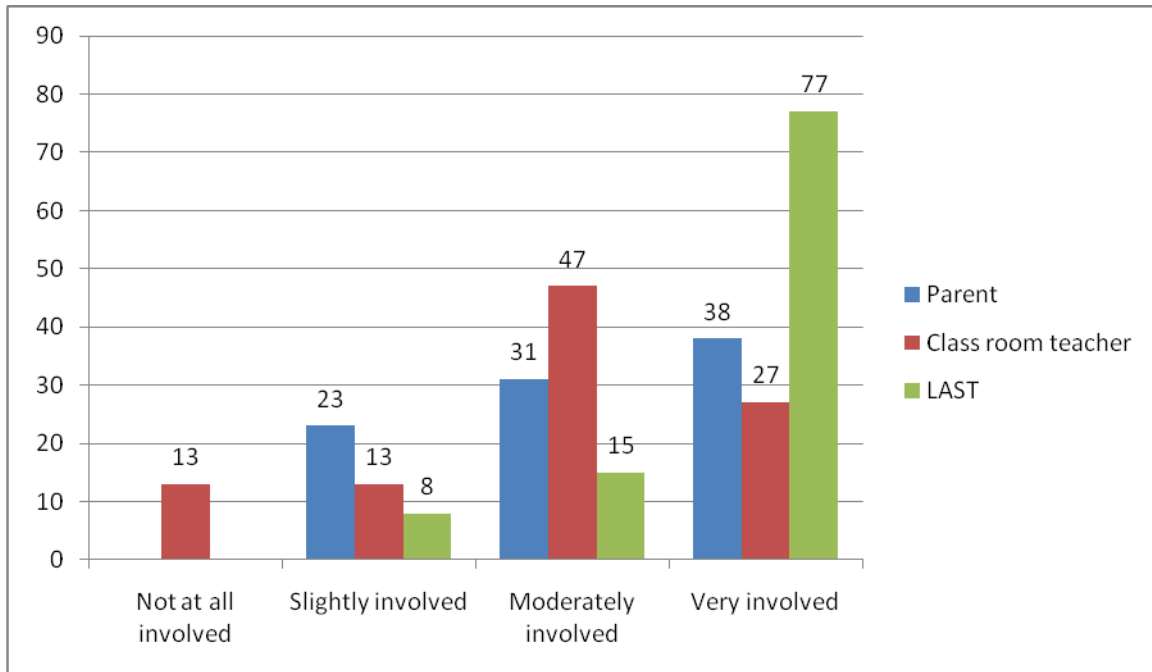


It seems that in all the case study schools the School Principal and/or School Executive which made decisions about how the ESES funds are distributed. In some schools there is involvement by the Learning and Support Team in the process, while in other schools they are not part of the decision making process.

> *I'm not sure. I know that with the new model there was also some flexible funding, so the principal can allocate that flexible funding according to how they see fit. Certainly I don't have any say; nor does the learning support team have any say in how that funding is allocated and maybe that's decided by the executive. I think it would probably be good if that was a bit more of a transparent process. Maybe that is in the annual report, I can't remember, but yeah I don't know how that money is allocated.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, city location).

This is somewhat disappointing as it suggests these schools are not exploiting the opportunities created to be more inclusive of the whole schools in making decisions and hence build ownership of the strategy across the school.

## FUNDING

The introduction of the ESES initiative saw a change to the funding arrangements to support children with additional learning and support needs. These changes were to how funds were allocated and distributed, not to the overall amount. These changes did however result in increases for some schools and decreases for others, depending on the composition of their student cohort. Our participants reflected this diversity with some 'winning' and others 'losing'.

> *The strength of the ESES we had a source of funding, not huge, but we do have a source of funding which we can directly apply when we have students who need it, so that's a really good thing, we don't have to go through a process.* (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

Whilst there was a sense from many participants that ESES had only a minor impact on day to day practice in schools the greater flexibility in the funding was widely welcomed. Principals in particular appreciated their ability to use funds more flexibly to maximise the impact on more students, not just those 'funded'. For many participants the real difference with ESES was that the money can be used more flexibly by the school, to cover a greater numbers of students needing learning support.

> *Well, normally, it can be either two ways. Either the teacher recommends a student to the LAST team or a parent comes up to either the principal or the classroom teacher that has concerns and then like a questionnaire or forms are filled out and then they're discussed at the LAST team…The structure was there before. It's how we spend the funding, that's what's changed.* (Classroom Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

*I think it puts the discretion about where to put support at the school level where we can gauge it well. It's not just the paperwork, we actually see the children. And I think that's actually a really positive thing...but I think being able to use the tools we have and are gaining, to actually look at the student in situ and see where the need it is really useful, without having to always go outside the school's expertise level.* (Principal, Secondary School, City area)

The on-line survey results indicate that on the whole respondents felt there were now more resources available to support students with additional learning assistance and support needs. This belief was strongest among parents and class room teachers who responded. Of course, these responses only included parents identified by principals as having a child currently receiving support. Further research with more parents of children with additional support needs is required to enhance our understanding of their experiences. Of note, over a quarter of principals and LASTs, people directly involved in managing budget resources, indicated there were less resources available post-2012.

**Figure 4: Availability of resources to support students since 2012**
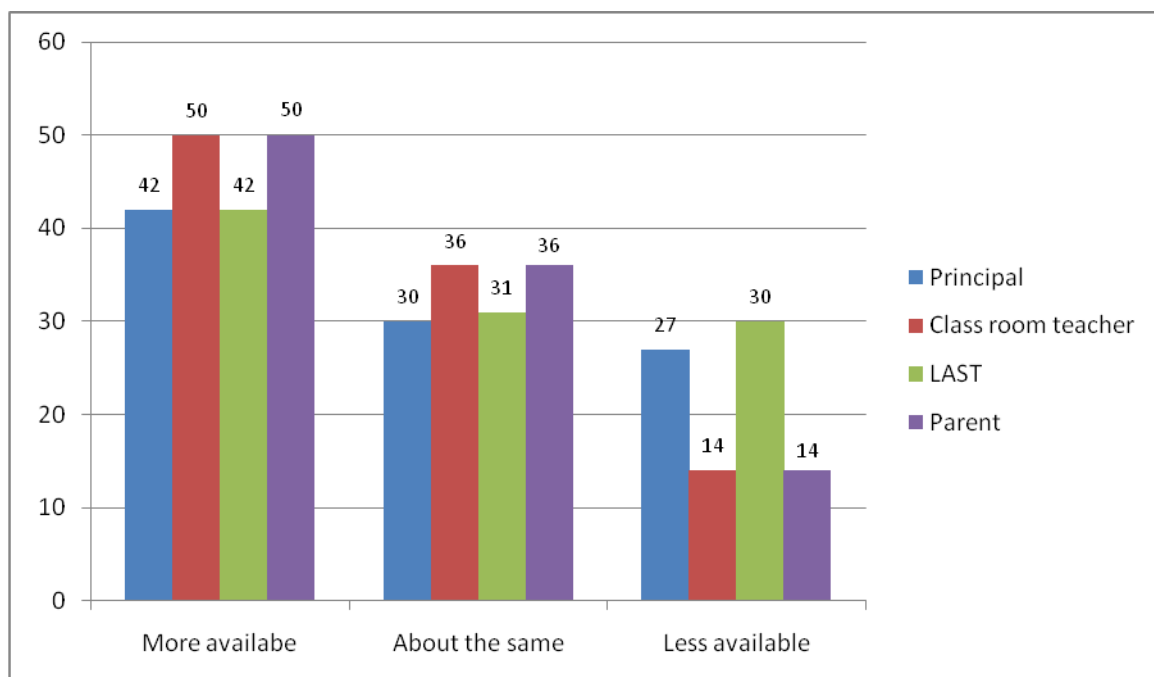
Below are two examples of how the ESES funding allows flexibility in schools. The funding can be used, for example, to fund help for parents outside of school or used to obtain specialist help in providing resources outside the education system:

> *And the job is changing, I've even gone to paediatric appointments with parents that aren't going to understand what the paediatrician is saying to them. That wasn't anything anyone would have done before but it has given us the flexibility through Every Student Every School that we can do that sort of thing, so you can offer more support to a family I think in some ways. (Deputy Principal, Primary School, Regional area)*

> *I think the system now is a lot more flexible and it opens the doors to a lot more specialist care, that's what I think. A lot more specialist care than we did before. (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)*

The flexibility of the ESES initiative also lends itself to allowing a wider group of children who would not previously have received support, to access assistance. Participants felt that more students can access targeted support which they would have been ineligible for previously. This comment is made in relation to a child who has not received a diagnosis, but who required speech therapy. The ESES funds allowed the school to purchase in speech therapy.

> *Well, we have a LAST team and Every Student, Every School, the funding was for there. We sat down and discussed areas of need in the school and one of the areas was the speech and the principal decided to bring in speech pathology and then from there we listed students that we felt throughout the school K to six that would benefit from having the speech therapist and we listed a number of students and then we took it to, we discussed who, you know, sort of a preferential thing. (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)*

In addition, the flexibility provides enormous benefits to students who may not have been able to access funding under the previous Integration Support Funding scheme. The new

ESES initiative also allows for timely intervention as there is no waiting time for the bureaucratic approval process since funds are available and support can begin immediately

> *Because sometimes those little, those kids get left by, you know, you got the real bottom ones and your real top ones but those ones that just need a little bit of a push and we're able to help them with this program. (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)*

> *Well, I think the main one I can think of is that if you've got a new kid, you can – because it's up to the school. You can reallocate resources and get funding straight away to the kid. Rather than waiting. (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)*

Because there is greater flexibility in managing funds, this means that Principals have the ability to plan further ahead which is seen as important for student outcomes and also in terms of using funds to upskill staff:

> *It means that you can set longer term goals. So you can look at upskilling and investing time and effort into upskilling somebody for an SLSO role knowing that it's going to be for quite some time, which allows you then to use them in a better way to create more opportunities for different types of programs rather than just always thinking will I, will I, will I have enough money. (Principal, Primary School, City area)*

The flexibility in funding also recognises that student support looks different for individual students and groups of students. What might work in one case, may not necessarily be the best approach for all students in all schools. The ESES initiative allows support mechanisms to be tailored and developed for students by staff in their own school setting as described by one Learning and Support Coordinator below:

> *There was a lot of work we worked on about what does support actually look like, how it's going to be embedded, because support might mean and as we've worked in our staff, it's just not you having SLSO time in your classroom. And there was a misunderstanding that people thought that's what support was, so we've done a lot*

*of work about the different types of support, the different levels of support and support needs to be fluid and flexible, depending on the students need.* (Learning and Support Coordinator, Primary School, Regional area)

## MAKING IT REAL IN THE CLASSROOM

The complexity of the task facing classroom teachers in enacting the philosophy of educational inclusion was captured in this response from a classroom teacher on the survey:

> *I am a very experienced teacher with a significant history of teaching students with special support needs. I have no special training in this area. A beginning teacher could find a classroom with students with significant special needs challenging and overwhelming. At times the physical limitations of the school and the timetable and time given to teachers to prepare, modify and communicate impedes on our ability to respond as well as we might. At times in a classroom of as many students as I have (18) it seems very unreasonable to think that a child can be properly supported for their learning needs to be met. (Classroom teacher, survey)*

Figure 5 below indicates that, on the whole, principals, classroom teachers, LASTs and parents were satisfied about the assistance and support provided through the ESES initiative. Approximately one quarter (or 1 in 4 schools) was satisfied with the resources available although 1 in 5 respondents (approximately 20%) expressed some dissatisfaction. It would appear that respondents felt there was room for improvement in schools capacities to support students with additional learning and support needs. Over 10% of class room teacher respondents expressed dissatisfaction. Among parents there was less certainty with higher don't know or unsure responses.

**Figure 5: Level of satisfaction with the assistance and support provided to child***
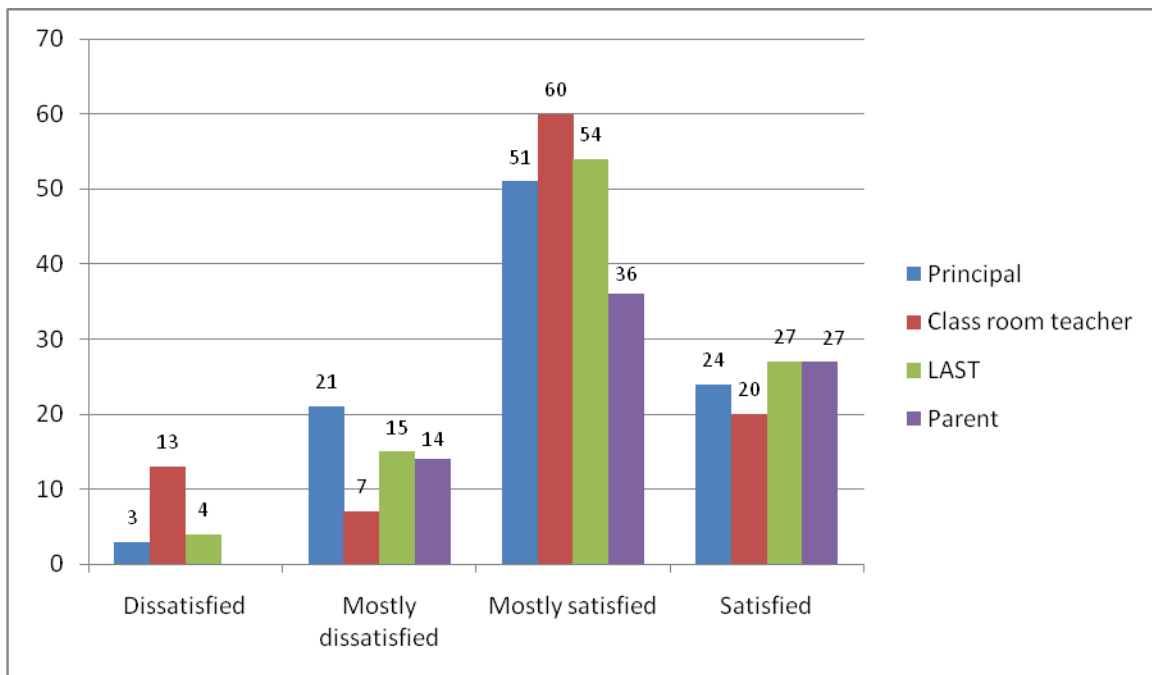


*Note: Parents were asked a slightly different question which focused on satisfaction in relation to the outcome of assistance provided for student*

Parents were provided with an open-ended option on the survey in relation to their children's experience. Some of the comments capturing their general satisfaction were:

> *My child is now being given support and his school work and attitude towards learning are improving.*

> *We have seen the most improvement this year. I believe the key here is his fantastic class teacher who has the right combination of experience and teaching style.*

> *He has just started to receive weekly additional support this year as he has been flying under the radar as his behaviour has not been a problem.*

Another important strength of ESES noted by participants in the case study schools lies in its philosophy and its ability to enhance teachers working collaboratively to build capacity in schools. The building of capacity relates to the ability of school staff to meet the needs of

students with additional needs. Rather than outsourcing the assessment and learning adjustments, for example staff are encouraged to undertake these activities for their students with the help of their local learning and support teams:

*But what I do think is a good part of the Every Student, Every School is that schools and teachers recognise their role in supporting every student in their class. But I know that that's been something ongoing for years and years and years. But I think what this does is it puts the onus back on the classroom teacher and the school to support the child irrespective of their diagnosis in an appropriate setting. And all schools can be an appropriate setting with the right support.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

*So when the change to Every Student Every School, and they talked about collaborative consultation and building up the capacity of the school with classroom teachers, some people were a bit argh, whereas for those of us that had always done that, it wasn't an issue. So that's what we do is we're looking at our learning and support teachers sitting down with teachers, talking about it, looking at strategies, how can we accommodate? How can we differentiate? No this test doesn't have to be the same for every kid.* (Principal, Secondary School, City area)

*Theoretically, I think it's based on quality teaching, it's everyone's business it's not just if you happen to be lucky or unlucky this year. I think it's building the system capacity to deal with students in mainstream.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

By the onus of the ESES framework being on schools to provide for all students, the capacity of the staff is necessarily increased to meet these demands as noted by one Primary School Principal:

*I also think it's important to increase staff capacity, and I think the flexible funding puts that onus on staff, that ownership of all of the students in their class.* (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

By upskilling staff, schools are better able to provide students with long term help and support. Thus the ESES initiative is seen by many as heading in the right direction:

> *The implementation of the differentiated program becomes more of a classroom teachers responsibility, rather than bringing in specialists for short bursts of time. I've never found that to be a particularly effective way of supporting staff or students, because they're in for a term and they're out for a term… So in the sense of being able to do long-term intervention and providing long-term support for the teacher and the student, I think this is actually a better model, if it's used that way. (Principal, Primary School, Regional Area)*

School Support and Learning Officers (SLSOs) provide vital support within classrooms but generally have been poorly trained and supported. One benefit of the ESES framework is that money can be spent on professional learning which is seen as providing a huge benefit to the staff and therefore to students in the school community. Schools have encouraged teachers and School Support and Learning Officers (SLSOs) to enrol in the training which has become available through the ESES initiative.

> *The professional learning has been more so since that came about, because there's more available. The online courses, definitely, as a result of Every School, Every Student, yeah.* (Deputy Principal, Secondary School, City area)

The on-line survey asked class room teachers and LASTs to rate the ability of the school to support teachers in implementing the ESES reforms. It asked Principals a similar a question in terms of their satisfaction about the support for teachers the school was able to provide. Figure 6 below indicates Principals were less confident in their school's ability to support class room teachers, which is likely to reflect the difficult budget environment they manage. LASTs were in general confident that teachers would be supported, with 88% indicating a rating of 'good' or 'very good'. Over a quarter of class room teacher respondents believed the schools capacity was limited or unknown.

**Figure 6: How do you rate the school's ability to provide assistance to classroom teachers?**
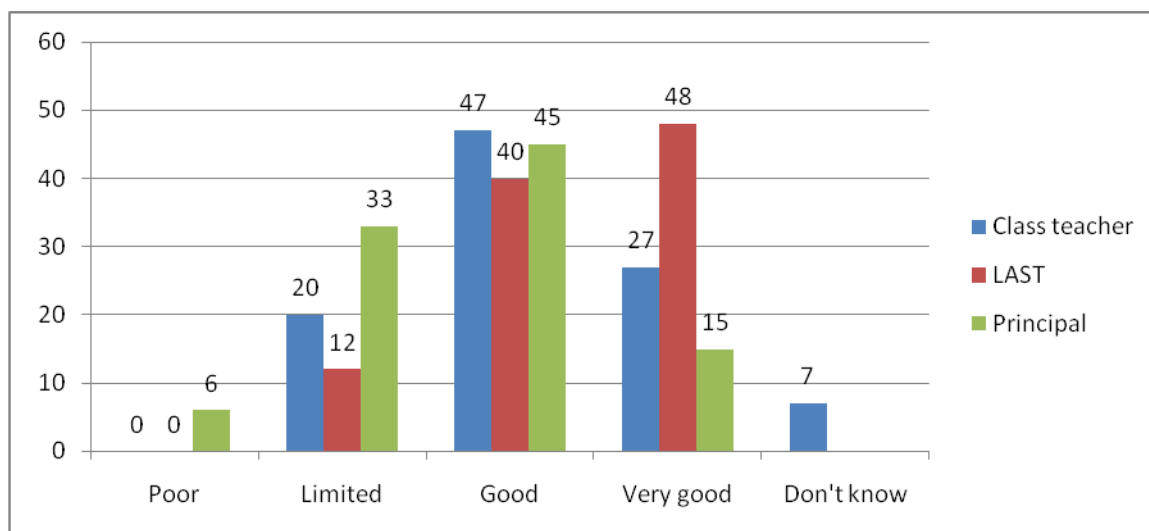


Another benefit noted by participants in the current study revolved around how the ESES framework seems to concentrate the teaching focus on student centred learning. Although there may have been some initial reservations about the framework and the time and work involved in differentiating the curricula for student with additional learning needs within the classroom, this Principal and Learning and Support Teacher believe that the benefits are beginning to come:

> So I think they've found that when actually you put in the time to set up a good unit of work that might have lots of choice and more student centred activities, I think what they find is that they actually get a chance to move around, nip things in the bud there and then, give the quality feedback that's needed rather than have to collect all the books and do it, because it's student centred. (Principal, Secondary School, City area)

> Simply for the fact that if you don't have a diagnosis, or there's something not recognised by the DM5, there's support there for you now. If you're just a student that's just low functioning for no reason, and the school flags you, you still have the right to be accessing just as much support as any other student. It's considered a

*disability to be low function, low literacy, numeracy. Just because there's no diagnosis, doesn't mean that there's not anywhere for them to access that extra support that they need, or for that teacher to know what's necessary for them to be engaged and to learn, to progress.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Secondary School, City area)

In these case study schools the ESES reforms were contributing to a significant shift in educational pedagogy in relation to students with additional learning and support needs, although these may have occurred independently. If we think of schools on a continuum of inclusive practices, the findings from the on-line survey suggest that the case study schools may be at the top of the continuum. Figure 7 below illustrates the teaching strategies used by classroom teachers and LASTs in supporting students learning. It indicates that small group learning outside of the classroom most commonly used by LASTs. In fact, the two main strategies employed by LASTs was withdrawal from classrooms, which is somewhat at odds with the principles of integration of learning within the classroom. Whilst classroom teachers identified small group and individual learning within the classroom as commonly used strategies a number noted that given class sizes individual assistance was often of very short duration.

**Figure 7: Teaching strategies used regularly in classroom to support students**
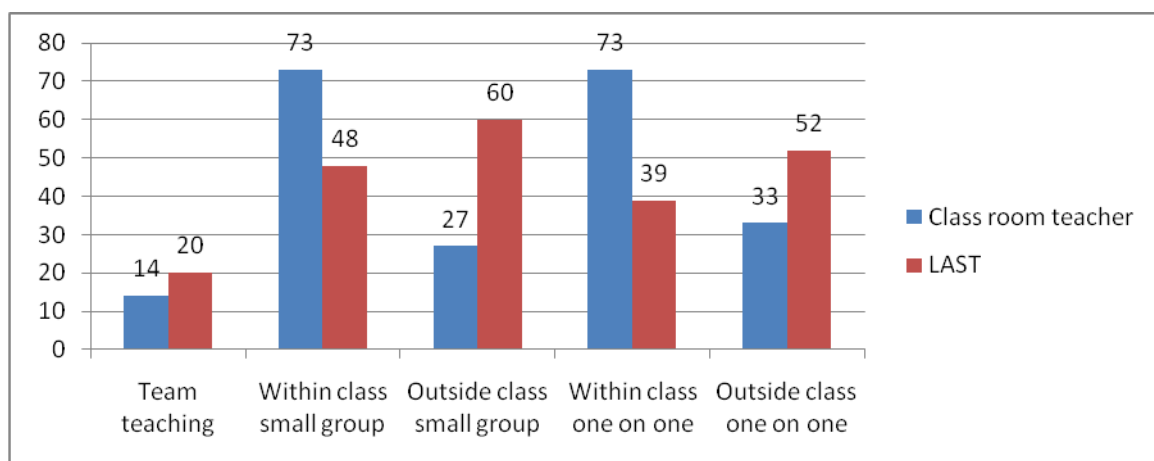


29% of classroom teachers rated the success of these strategies as 'very successful' compared to 54% of LASTs. Learning outcomes are obviously also very important to parents. Figure 8 below indicates that most parents reported a good improvement in their child's

outcomes from the learning support offered. A smaller group reported significant improvements. Classroom teachers were more likely to identify both slight as well as significant improvements then parents.

**Figure 8: Parent and Classroom teachers rating of the outcome of learning support**
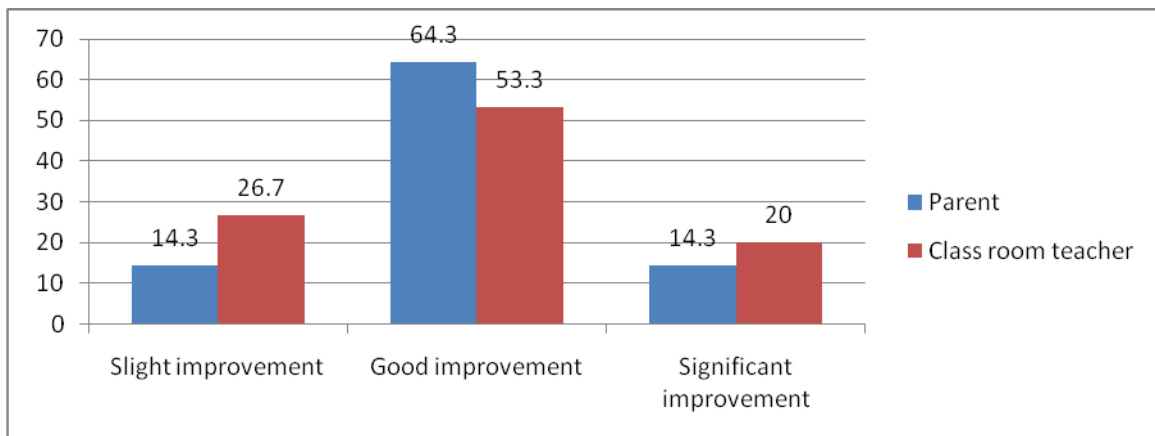
BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

There were a number of ways given whereby participants believed that ESES benefitted the whole school community. Students were believed, for example, to benefit from having a mixture of abilities in the school which encourages the whole community to be accepting of difference. A focus on capacity building of staff and enhancing skills had ripple effects beyond specific classroom strategies.

> *The issue that we've tried to approach now and sort of employee training to the teachers specifically is what we would do is we would take that student out previously and have someone work with that student. Whereas now we are trying to employ somebody who will come in and work in the classroom so that we can train the teachers and that will then follow on through the next years. When the teacher has the training and has the information that I think gets spread further, instead of working on one child, work on the teacher who then has the skills to be able to share. (*Learning and Support Coordinator, Primary School, City area)

Also because of the flexible funding associated with the ESES initiative, another strength of the framework is that it can be used to fund a service which is expensive and beyond the economic reach of the some within the school community as highlighted below by this example at a regional Primary School:

*Well we can spread the money around between more kids. I mean we've done that here. We use the funding to support the speech therapy program, you know, you get 20 kids to tap in and hopefully the parents have taken the recommendations after the program and have run with it, particularly when it is such an expensive service if you can't afford to access private and then you've got to wait such a long time to access it through the public system. So I think just having that flexibility within our learning support team to work out how you want to spend that money, that's been the bonus for us.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, Regional area).

The case study schools involved in the interviews differed in how they worked with parents in relation to the leaning and support needs of students. Some schools sought to involve parents from the very beginning of the process when the learning and support team first became aware of the student referral, where as other schools only alerted parents once a decision had been made for the Learning Support Team to work with students in the classroom. Most of the school staff said they attempted to engage with parents, and it is interesting to look at the impressions formed by parents in relation to how well this engagement was achieved. Here is one example from a Primary School which attempts to engage fully with parents:

*…and also working with parents, working as a team. And that's been a really big thing here, is we work with our parents and have them in for meetings and also that flow of communication. So I think that that's the case, for me it's that building of skill set, building capacity, looking at the child as a whole and amalgamating all the support services out there together so that things aren't done in isolation.* (Learning and Support Coordinator, Primary School, Regional area)

Figure 9 below shows the responses received from parents in the on-line survey in relation to two related questions. Firstly, how aware are they of the support available to their child in school and, secondly, how involved were they in decision making about this support. Close to 4 in 5 responses indicated a good level of awareness although involvement in decision making is substantially lower. It is pleasing however that no parent respondent indicated they had no involvement in decision making about their child's support needs.

**Figure 9: Parents' experience of working with schools**
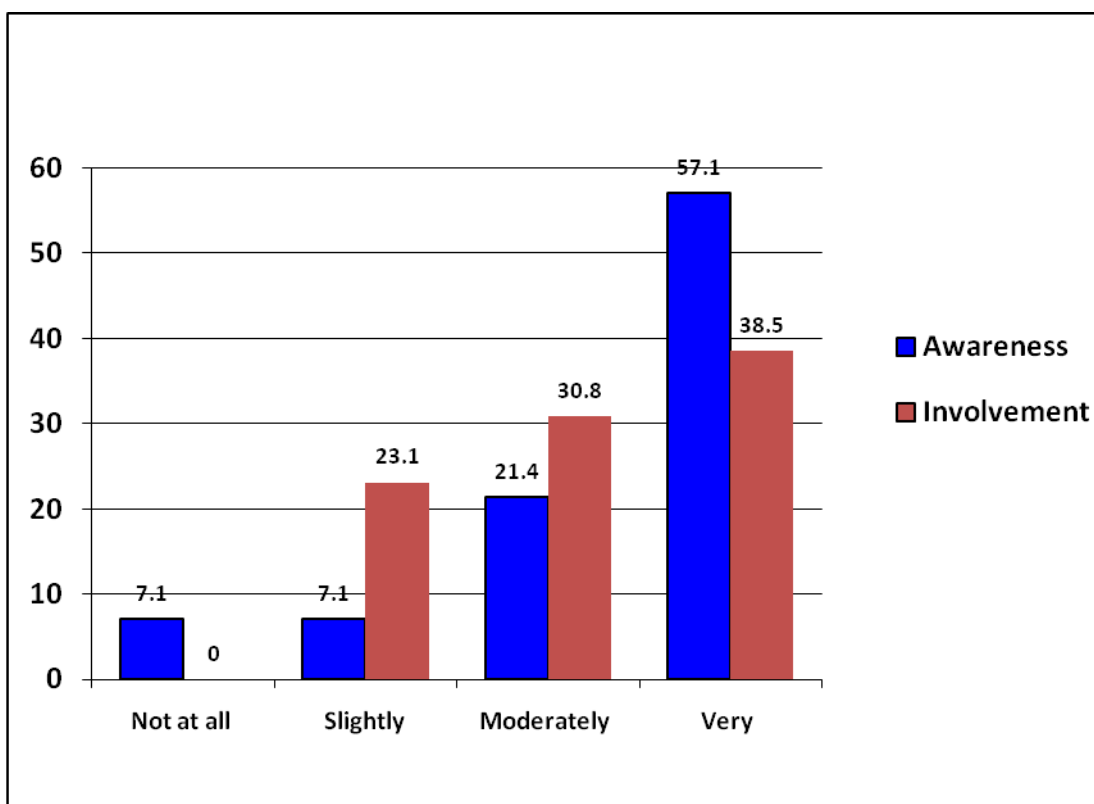


Only one parent respondent had been provided information or training in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act (including the Disability Standards for Education), despite the vast majority (86%) rating this knowledge as 'very important'. Table 8 below reports respondents' views on the consistency of the existing arrangements with the Disability Discrimination Act.

**Table 9: How consistent are the existing arrangements with the DDA (on-line survey %)**

| Respondent | Inconsistent | Low consistency | Moderately consistent | Very consistent | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parent | 7 | 7 | 22 | 7 | 57 |
| Principal | 3 | 3 | 24 | 70 | 0 |
| Classroom teachers | 0 | 7 | 33 | 33 | 27 |
| LAST | 0 | 4 | 31 | 65 | 0 |

Over half of the parent respondents indicated they didn't know whether the existing arrangements for their children were consistent with the Disability Discrimination Act, suggesting the need for greater education targeting parents about the Act. 27% of classroom teachers were also unsure.

## 2.3.    CONTINUING CHALLENGES

This section highlights the continuing challenges of achieving the principles of inclusion in NSW public schools. Whilst ESES was generally welcomed a number of study participants highlighted areas for further development including:

- Access to greater specialist support
- Access to ongoing professional development opportunities
- Greater guidance from DEC about ESES implementation
- Making it 'real' in the classroom
- Funding the need
- Whole of school cultural change

### ACCESS TO GREATER SPECIALIST SUPPORT

The disbanding of the regional support teams was considered by many participants as a limitation in relation to the implementation of the ESES strategy. The introduction of the new strategy coincided with the dismantling of the regional specialists which had implications for schools. While the teachers in these positions were relocated to schools, they were often experts in only one area and are not necessarily specialists across a range of areas. The comment by this teacher outlined below, is that these teachers may not be adequately qualified to assist with the range of issues presented at each school.

> *And at the regional level that meant that you couldn't access a learning support teacher behaviour or a learning support teacher autism, you had to rely on the staff within your school.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

In this way the ESES initiative decreased access to specialist knowledge and support for schools and teachers. Whilst the capacity building aspect of the initiative was seen as positive, there was a sense that the generic nature of the LAST role created potential difficulties (for the LAST themselves as well as others).

*[The Learning and Support Teacher] is meant to be the expert for behaviour and learning assistance in our school now that we speak to and we access.  Maybe it's better if there's a team, I found before when the team would come in there was definitely a behavioural specialist and there was a learning specialist.  I think [the Learning and Support Teacher] is now wearing both of those hats or doing both those kinds of jobs or supposed to be now.* (Class Teacher, Primary School, City area)

There were a range of issues identified in relation to the role of Learning and Support Teachers in the ESES framework. An important issue raised was the variability in the quality of Learning and Support Teachers. Participants' spoke of their experiences of having LASTS's who were very skilled in either learning or behaviour and some did not have a strong background in learning support. While some LAST's had good knowledge of resources and services like the example given below, others did not. This variety and difference in the experience and knowledge of the Learning and Support Teachers has implications for schools if they are to operate autonomously with the need to access local networks and resources as shown in the second quotation below.

*I think having a person allocated to your school for instance the learning support teacher, we increased our allocation which was great.  Also that that person has quite a lot of background and training in special education has been a real bonus. And I think also knowing that you've got this three-day allocation with a trained person also allows you to    have stronger programs in place because you're not always upskilling your STLA every year and you've got someone who knows how to access all the appropriate support*. (Principal, Primary School, City area)

*But the LAST in school is usually just a staff member who was a bit interested.  We don't have any special expertise here.  If you said who our LAST is, I don't know if you*

*asked the others, but the school actually…I wasn't here so I can say, the school actually readjusted some of their staffing to create an extra class, so I've got very small class sizes, but no LAST off class.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

A number of participants also expressed concern about long term planning in relation to Learning and Support Teaching staff. They wondered what would happen as the current teachers retire – what kind of training are student teachers getting in relation to special education? How are younger, newer teachers' going to be incentivised to learn about special education? This certainly represents a challenge for the future.

*I think over the years as our learning support teachers who have been trained and have been experienced in all sorts of different roles, as we start to lose them from the system through retirement I wonder who we're getting in terms of replacements. There used to be a special education course where you could do a one year intensive course, a cadetship in special education, and I don't think that's offered anymore.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

## ACCESS TO ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

While some in the study were appreciative of the training opportunities afforded by the ESES strategy, others were critical of the lack of resources for schools, especially in relation to behaviour and mental health. The feeling was that the Learning and Support Staff would become generalists, rather than being specialists across a range of issues:

*Behaviour and mental health are two areas I don't think we have a lot of support in, so those kind of multi categorical disciplines.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

*…in order for it to be effective there needs to be more skilled multi categorical types of training. And I think that's problematic, I think not being able to specialise in a particular area and having to be a generalist in special education is problematic quite frankly… the disadvantage of having Every Student, Every School where all*

*your special educators are supposed to be generalists I think is an issue.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

While the philosophy of the ESES strategy might be sound, the ESES framework was seen by some to fall down in practice. There are difficulties surrounding implementation, there is insufficient leadership and schools are not supported adequately to ensure the framework is carried out to effectively meet student need.

> *Well I think that's the philosophical part of Every Student, Every School thing that I agree with and understand. How it's carried out and how the teachers are supported is where I think it's problematic. I don't think our teachers have enough training, and schools themselves have to be the support and some of us are good at it and some of us aren't.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

As mentioned previously, ESES aimed at facilitating cultural change and as in any case of change there will be resistance. Some Principals spoke of teacher resistance in relation to implementation of the ESES framework and the slow pace of change when some teachers embrace the initiative, while others are less enthusiastic. Ongoing professional development is essential (for pre-service and current teachers) is essential to achieving the aims of educational inclusion.

> *Yeah, so there will always be one or two teachers too that always think it's somebody else's problem that needs to solve it, but most teachers are pretty good and collaborative.* (Principal, Secondary School, City area)

> *The staff didn't want a bar of actually being responsible for managing the students with special needs in their classrooms.* (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)
> *We had a bit of resistance to the implementation of the IPs and the PLPs that the teachers needed to actually show in their programs that they were taking account of those, but once they got a day to work with the school learning support coordinator, to see how they could put it into their program and make it part of the normal*

*programming structure, this became a lesser battle.* (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

The challenge in relation to provision of professional development and training would seem to revolve around consideration of content, delivery methods and timeliness of delivery. While some in the study embraced the use of online training, others preferred to learn using a blended delivery mode which consisted of a combination of online and face to face content. The timeliness of the training was also considered important as teachers requested access to information when they had a student in their class with additional requirements. In addition, participants also recognised that training benefits participants if it is tailored to the needs of individual schools – this may mean that for example, Learning and Support Teachers receive the training and return to their school to deliver localised professional development to staff within their own setting. This means they can tailor the training to the needs of their teaching community and student population and increase the relevancy of the information and professional development to staff in their local school.

> *I think actually schools or networks of schools need to be able to know where they can tap into support that they can then individualise for their own setting.  Because I think one of the problems with going to courses is that they're not necessarily as responsive to your school situation and your school community as if you were to create it or find the process, be in charge of the process yourself.* (Principal, Primary School, City area)

On a broader issue, some more experienced teachers in the sample commented that new graduates appear insufficiently trained in dealing with students with additional learning and support needs:

> *Oh they come out, they have got bugger all of an idea of how to deal with students with extra learning needs, they really don't.  There's a lot of stuff that the universities don't do.*  (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

One of the interviewees was a new graduate and because the position was temporary there was only informal mentoring available in the school. This raises questions in terms of whose responsibility it is to mentor new and more experienced teachers who have students with a range of disabilities within their classrooms. While the new graduate explained that inclusive units had formed part of pre teacher training, another comment included:

*In terms of straight out of university, you're not exposed to enough ways to deal with situations and confront them and ways to support students and that sort of thing.*
*But I think that all comes down to experience. Like you need the hands on experience.*
(Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

The participants' experiences suggest that a continuum of support for schools would be useful, both specialist and generalist. The quote below highlights the effectiveness of local support provided by a LAST with access to specialist support.

*But like I said we've got such a strong team with X now working next to me, she's basically doing part of the learning support role, but she's working with teachers and doing mentoring outside of the classroom.  So she's working with teachers to develop the tasks, or develop the assessment tasks, and then basically she'll hand the task to me and I'll go into the classroom and then model it and implement it at the same time as the teacher.  So she's doing the work on the outside, I can do the work on the inside, and it's runs like a well oiled machine in that way.* (Learning and Support Teacher, High School, City location)

## GREATER GUIDANCE FROM DEC ABOUT ESES IMPLEMENTATION

As mentioned previously, one of the positive aspects of the ESES initiative was the emphasis on flexibility in the use of funding in schools in order to flexibly meeting the needs of the student population. Conversely, some participants felt that this may result in inconsistencies

in approaches applied across schools. This is highlighted by the comments of one Learning and Support Teacher who worked at two different schools which operated in different ways:

*No, I've not had much input into behaviour programs here in this school, other than helping teachers at the beginning of the year, help write their IEPs for students with special needs and then I'm sort of out of it, but I do work in two schools. In my other school I have a more consultative role, because it's a much bigger school, so I find myself doing a lot of behavioural observations because I'm trained in behaviour and doing recommendations and making programs for teachers with students with special needs, particularly behaviour at the moment. So, I'd say my role there is a little broader. Here it's very much a teaching role. I think that supporting teachers is bigger in my other school.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, city location)

This variability in the role is also seen in how students with additional learning needs are catered for within individual schools. While some teachers preferred students to be taught within the mainstream classroom, others withdrew children for specialized support:

*Here, yes I teach in a withdrawal model, so I withdraw students one-to-one and I withdraw for homogeneous groups and I do additional assessment. So, is it relevant what I do, at other schools?* (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, city location)

Some participants desired a greater assurance from DEC in relation to schools with higher numbers of students requiring support. While the flexibility in the funding arrangements within ESES are seen as beneficial by most, some schools perceive that they have limited control if the specific need in individual schools is high. This perception reflects the universal as against needs based approach of the funding arrangements of ESES, as shown below:

*Well there's no control over the funding. What happens if you get a cohort that has two down syndrome students, three autism spectrum disorder students, and they happen. You get blips like that coming through, and then all of the support will need*

*to go to that particular cohort because that will be a school-based decision, that's where the most need is, we're going to get some very unhappy parents, and some very unhappy teachers in those kinds of situations, because you can't access more.* (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

*So I think it could have been done better. I think there needs to be some assurance that if there is a blip in a cohort that there is access to extra support.* (Principal, Primary School, Regional area)

Among participants there was a sense that achieving the most effective use of ESES funds was not easy and greater guidance and resourcing from DEC may assist.

*I don't know as such whether it's a weakness, I just feel that if your funding is not utilised in the proper way, given that as we said, you know, we may have someone come out and train us and just talk to us. But unless we understand that and we know how that actually looks and works in a classroom, it's wasted money. I think it depends on exactly how things are organised as to whether that could be a possible negative.* (Learning Support Coordinator, Primary School, City area)

Anecdotally, participants spoke of some schools not using funds appropriately, although we found no evidence of this. It was postulated that because schools control how the ESES funding is used, some schools may use the funding in the intended way while others may not use funds to benefit students with additional learning and support needs.

## MAKING IT 'REAL' IN THE CLASSROOM

Building the capacity of classroom teachers is essential to achieving the goals of ESES. There were a number of challenges noted by Classroom Teachers and Learning and Support Staff in relation to the implementation of the ESES strategy. The major challenge experienced by Classroom Teachers in the study related to the time needed to make amendments and

accommodations for students with additional learning needs within the classroom as outlined by this teacher:

> Time's a big factor, I think. Being able to plan for, to differentiate learning experiences and activities for the students who need that extra support and assistance. (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

The impact of not developing specifically adjusted materials results in less than desired student learning outcomes this Secondary teacher explains:

> …you can develop one resource for the whole class and work from that, but if you develop that resource for the whole class and give it to the student that's got the additional need, they're going to sit there and they're not going to achieve the goal that you want them to achieve. (Class Teacher, Secondary School, City area)

In addition, teachers in the study noted the challenges of working with younger children whose difficulties are as yet unknown. While they are too young to receive a diagnosis, their behaviour is disruptive to many in the classroom which creates a difficult and disruptive environment for teachers as explained in the following example:

> My one with the diagnosis is the easy one. No children, and we're talking five and six year olds, who are undiagnosed who are extremely disruptive, won't follow instruction, won't listen to teachers or anyone so [I'm] in the process now of working with the school counsellor to put some things in place and look at some strategies. (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

Another challenge mentioned was the challenge to provide more support to students at an earlier age:

> More money. I would like to see more support for our children with a mild intellectual disability without having to send them to a support class. I think if we could get back

*into supporting those kids, particularly early on before they get to high school, I think we'd have less issues.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

There were also challenges associated with implementing ESES in an environment of changing conditions, where the ground rules were described as 'changing' and where nothing stays the same.

*And it's getting more and more and that's probably our big challenge at the moment, we've got this new curriculum coming in, now last year there was a consultant to support us with the implementation ready for the English. Now we've got the maths coming in next year and science and there are no consultants. So that is our big challenge. We've got to implement this new curriculum with no outside DEC support. They make sure you differentiate it, so all the children can access it and we're struggling to get our heads around this new curriculum.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

The class room teachers that responded to the on-line survey also identified 'more time' as essential to improving their capacity to support students with additional learning and support needs. More time was identified by half of the classroom teachers, although how it might be used to enhance their teaching varied. A number of classroom teachers recommended additional time for training and making the adjustments required in their programming. Others thought additional time, through smaller class sizes, could be used to better support individual students with additional needs. Additional time would also enable them to participate in network meetings and keep informed about the schools plans.

The issue of professional development and capacity building of classroom teachers was also identified by principals and LaSTs survey respondents. It would seem from the on-line responses that achieving the goals of ESES of improved educational outcomes for all created significant challenges for classroom teachers and that teachers required more support, as captured in the following comments

*Teachers need more support in developing management techniques that support learning*

*More access to technologies that can support their learning*

*More support with differentiating their programs*

*More professional learning in strategies that work*

*More professional learning in dealing with specific Learning disabilities*

Respondents had diverse ideas on how individual classroom teacher's capacities could be enhanced. Some respondents were critical of the on-line training model; many spoke of the need to 'responsive' training tailored to a specific need; and others spoke of the importance of better IT and administrative resources. Ideally

*…we could work with teachers and there was dedicated time to work with them. We also did demonstration lessons, worked with children individually, set up programs, developed resources, so did a lot to help in that way, but we weren't there to teach to children but we were there to model….* (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, city location)

## FUNDING THE NEED

While participants were supportive of the philosophy of the ESES strategy they were also concerned about trying to meet a seemingly, ever increasing student need with limited funds. This was especially relevant when teachers perceived the level of need to be increasing as described in the following examples:

*Because, I mean, even if it's a new way of doing it, there is still that limited bucket of money. You've got to try and get it to go around as many kids – get it to go as best as you can.* (Class Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

*Oh yeah the challenge. Yes, that the LaS teacher cannot hope, cannot dream of meeting the needs of 160 students for the reading difficulties that they're going to find in that school. So, if you're looking at the bottom 3% to 5% with severe learning difficulties or you're looking at the 10% with slightly more and perhaps not so long-term learning difficulties, the numbers are just too vast.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, City area)

The issue of funding also was strongly highlighted in the on-line survey, particularly by Principals. This funding related to the support services schools would be able to provide or access but also to the support of classroom teachers. Additional funding would enable the school to be innovative in its responses.

*Teachers also need access to units of work and modules from which they can model appropriate adjustments for a range of student needs. The opportunity to share with other teachers in their subject would mean a reduction in the amount of work required by individual teachers.*

*If you are a school that does not receive additional funding sources you begin to feel like you are always behind the game.*

## WHOLE OF SCHOOL CULTURAL CHANGE

Another challenge noted by participants in the study was the importance of ensuring that all schools believe in the value of ESES and have leadership which builds cultural change. The schools which have strong leadership in terms of ESES and are firm believers of the philosophy are the schools who self-selected to be part of our study. The difficulty is that we have not heard from schools without strong leadership in relation to ESES and who were not interested in participating in this study.

*…we really believe strongly about the disability standards for education, and that every kid needs to have an opportunity to learn, in whatever environment they want*

*to learn, whether it be that they want to be in their support class, or whether it be that they want to be in a mainstream class. And because of that we have put all the measures in place to make sure that all of those kids are provided with whatever learning environment it is that best suits them. I don't know that it would be as effective in a school that didn't believe and the philosophy that they have wasn't as strong as ours. I think it really comes from a school push*. (Deputy Principal, Secondary School, City area)

*I think if schools aren't identifying students, and there are students everywhere, it doesn't matter where you are, there are students everywhere that need additional support, but I think that somebody needs to be trained up in your school as to how to identify them, and what would that look like in a classroom? I think all schools should have an active learning and support team, and I don't think that that happens everywhere either.* (Deputy Principal, Secondary School, City area)

This comment also supports the idea that the success of the ESES implementation is fostered by a Principal or Executive Staff with a strong interest in special education and a desire to ensure all students within the school community are catered for:

*…and we get a pretty clear picture in our school on how it's going in comparison to other schools within that framework. I feel overwhelmed every time, not overwhelmed in a bad way, but a good way on how well we're doing here at the school. I just feel like I'm really supported within this community here. I know a lot of the other learning and support teachers don't feel supported, they feel like they're going against the grain constantly.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Secondary School, City area)

*And we've been lucky, [our Principal] is very much a driving force with every student, every school. She's got lots of great ideas, she's taken me on board to keep going with this role, which I've said we'll do again next year.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

Commitment to inclusive education and whole of school cultural change is evident in the way in which the school develops and runs its Learning and Support Team, for example, if the team meetings are priority, how often they are run and how well resourced and staffed the meetings are. For example, one LAST in a primary school reported weekly half hour meetings attended by eight staff members (including the Principal, Three Assistant Principals, school counsellor, reading recovery and the two part time Learning and Support teaching staff). These meetings are prioritised with high staff energy and involvement.

> *I think our journey here we've been very fortunate that we've got so many talented people who are willing to embrace the change, but also be supported through that change.* (Learning and Support Teacher, Primary School, Regional area)

## CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

This study explored the impact of the ESES initiative on students with additional learning and support needs in NSW public schools from the perspectives of parents, classroom teachers, Learning & Support Teachers and Principals. It aimed to obtain both a broad and nuanced understanding through the collection of both survey and interview data. This section aims to discuss and draw conclusions from the different data sources. The section concludes with recommendations to enhance the support provided to students with additional learning and support needs.

It was widely acknowledged in the study that the flexibility of the current ESES funding strategy results in benefits to a broad range of students with learning and support needs in NSW Public Schools. The ESES initiative was perceived more favourably by participants in the study than the previous Integration Support Funding model.

Under the Integration Support Funding system, funding was provided and 'attached' to individual students in contrast to the ESES framework which was understood by participants to be more of a 'whole school' approach to disability. While the funding was attached to a particular child with a disability diagnosis under the old system, the funding was reportedly, not always easy to secure. While teachers and parents may have recognised that learning difficulties were contributing to a student's behavioural issues or failure to thrive in the learning environment, due to a lack of formal diagnosis, the student was ineligible for support prior to April 2012. In contrast, the current ESES approach provides flexibility for schools to use funding in areas of need within their own school population in a timely manner which was widely welcomed.

While the flexibility of the ESES funding framework was perceived positively and its ability for supporting a wide range of students greeted favourably by participants, questions were raised about the situation which could arise when school populations include a greater than average number of students with learning difficulties. The increased number of students

requiring additional services, while not diagnosed with a disability, may require more support in the classroom than the ESES funding can provide. This was a noted concern.

The philosophy of Integration Support Funding was also perceived differently to the philosophy of ESES. Participants related stories about the limited role taken by the classroom teacher in meeting the needs of students with additional needs prior to 2012. Under the previous model participants reported that many saw the regional support team, the learning support team or the ESL team as being responsible for catering to the needs of these students. Thus the expectation prior to 2012 was that it was someone else's responsibility to deal with students with additional learning needs. This is in direct contrast with the ESES philosophy which was described as helping students through capacity building in schools.

The philosophy of the ESES framework was generally acknowledged and understood by participants in the study. Principals and LASTS were more knowledgeable about the initiative than some class teachers and parents who were unable to articulate well their understanding of the strategy. The promotional information provided by the Department of Education and Communities directed towards Principals plus the restructuring of the Learning and Support roles may go some way to explaining the higher knowledge levels of these groups. Following discussion of the ESE initiative, however, staff and parents interviewed believed that ESES is heading in the right direction. While there was some resistance noted by some staff by other staff members to the concept, the majority of teachers in the study embraced the ideals behind the initiative.

As individuals differ in their understanding and practical application of the ESES framework, so too do schools. While the majority of the schools in the study had well-functioning learning and support teams, others were less well developed and resourced. The importance placed on schools to address the needs of students with additional learning issues, was firmly influenced by the enthusiasm of the Principal and/or the Executive leadership team. The interviews in particular showed that if the leadership group is supportive of the notion of helping all children to succeed and thrive academically (a cornerstone of the ESES framework) then this enthusiasm flows through the school and is

highlighted by a well-resourced, functioning and valued learning and support team with regular, well attended meetings. These schools are characterised by working collaboratively with parents and involving them in discussions about developing workable strategies to meet student need. While schools communicated with parents in different ways and at different stages of the process, parents were aware that their child's needs were being addressed and that the school was working to make a difference to student outcomes in the classroom. For some parents improvements in their child's educational achievements were quite marked whilst for others there was a sense that more resources, support and time was needed.

Opinions differed regarding the importance of regional support in schools and the fact that since the introduction of ESES, the regional assistance has ceased. Some in the study were critical and upset about the loss of knowledge associated with these positions, while others who had negative experiences of the service, did not perceive the loss to be significant. The implications of losing regional support, is that the emphasis is more firmly placed on individual schools to provide their own 'expert' advice through Learning and Support Teachers. The problem noted during the interviews however, was that LASTS are not always experts across a broad area of knowledge. The LAST's may, for example, have been an expert in behaviour or autism, but may possess neither the generalist skills to work in a whole school setting nor possess a detailed knowledge of accessing and finding resources about a range of educational issues. This is certainly an aspect of the ESES framework which based on the results of this study, requires attention. A more helpful approach may be building individual school capacity <u>and</u> ensuring access to specialist knowledge.

There are challenges regarding how professional learning is delivered to teachers in schools. Should training be whole school based or targeted at individual teachers; should it be delivered online or face to face? Should the content of professional development provide general information about learning difficulties or should it be more interactive and provide strategies for working with and assisting students in the classroom?  These questions are all balanced with the costs of providing training, for example, costs involved with course payment plus paying for relief staff for teachers to attend the training. The training content also needs to be perceived as relevant to the needs of the school and in that sense targeted

to particular professional learning needs of each school. It is suggested that a train the trainer model focused on up-skilling LASTs would be a useful addition to ESES. The LASTs appear very well placed to build the capacity of staff in their own schools and conduct in-house training for staff which can be tailored to the individual school needs. The LASTs understand their own school context and can adapt the training they received to their own school environments. It is clear from this study that those schools with an active, well supported, LAST are successful in supporting students with additional learning and support needs. In order to achieve the aspirations of ESES these positions (with appropriate hours released from class room teaching in smaller schools) should be available in most schools. Additionally, it is recommended that broader training be provided for Learning and Support Teachers. While the 20 hours in relation to particular topics was seen as sufficient, in other areas, more detailed knowledge and training is recommended. Under the ESES model, LASTs are the experts in schools and therefore need to be in a position to help teachers, SLSOs and parents with students with a range of difficulties. The LAST positions should be a merit appointment based on demonstration of knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm in supporting students with additional learning and support needs.

As is the case in many areas of social provision, rural and regional schools faced additional barriers to supporting students with additional learning and support needs. These barriers have not been overcome by the ESES initiative, although it was generally welcomed. The ability to access expert advice and support was a crucial issue for non-metropolitan schools. On-line resources were helpful but insufficient to ensure all students in schools, regardless of their location, thrive. Participants, particularly classroom teachers, desired responsive and hands-on support. In many rural areas specialist support is not available and hence this should be made available centrally. The knowledge gained through training needed to be tailored to the challenges they faced in the classroom. For example, there was limited value doing an on-line module on supporting students with autism if the student in their classroom had an intellectual disability.  Some potential strategies to address this include:

    a.    Encouraging localised meetings/networks so schools can discuss what they are doing in relation to the ESES implementation. Shared stories and reflection might enable some schools to understand how to better implement the strategies in their

own school and allow the schools to share their expertise. These meetings would also enable information sharing about good web based resources, blog sites etc.

b. LAST Network meetings –an opportunity exists to use LAST network meetings to get out new knowledge and information to LASTs/interested other parties who can then be given opportunity within their own schools to disseminate the information and start local discussion on best practice in relation to providing support for students with additional learning needs. This could be a very effective opportunity for education and knowledge dissemination.

c. Establishment of regional data bases with details of specialist services (such as speech therapists) available in the local area. Disseminating this information to schools in a region counters the potential duplication and waste of scarce resources.

The study also identified support needs for classroom teachers and SLSOs working in classrooms. Classroom teachers themselves identified one factor that would enhance their work very strongly: *time*. In order to achieve the aspirations of inclusive education classroom teachers need time within school hours to develop resources, learning plans and collaborate with the LASTs. Further training opportunities are required in relation to working most effectively with SLSO's, how to make accommodations and how to make adaptations to programs for students with additional learning and support needs.

There needs to be much great promotion and dissemination of the expertise currently held within Schools for Special Purposes. Whilst few participants with experience in SSP environments participated in this study, those that did described projects of relevance to other schools. There appears to be limited collaboration across SSP and mainstream schools. DEC should actively disseminate project outcomes, including information about each project and how they can be accessed. This strategy needs to counter the belief that the differences between the SSP environment and the mainstream environment are so great, that some initiatives would not transfer across to a mainstream classroom with 30 children and no support teacher in the room.

The study aimed to explore the perceived benefits of the 'Every Student, Every School' initiative according to Principals, Class Teachers, Support Teachers and Parents of students with additional learning and support needs. The study found the benefits of ESES to be associated with:

- Flexibility in decision making

- Building capacity in schools

- Promoting student centred learning

- Benefitting the whole school community

- Increased staff training

- Encouraging partnerships with parents.

Participants in the study considered a number of continuing challenges facing schools in achieving inclusive education, including:

- Access to greater specialist support

- Access to ongoing professional development opportunities

- Greater guidance from DEC about implementation of ESES

- Making it 'real' in the classroom

- Funding the need

- Whole of school cultural change

The key areas around which recommendations are made include:

1. **Learning and Support staff**

2. **Professional Development**

3. **Harnessing the expertise of Schools for Specific Purposes**

4. **Regional Networks**

5. **Ongoing monitoring**

## LEARNING AND SUPPORT STAFF

It is recommended that schools have access to Learning and Support Teachers who are well trained, knowledgeable across areas and adequately employed to perform the roles and responsibilities of learning support within the school setting.

This recommendation can be achieved by:

- Ensuring that Learning and Support Teachers have greater access to training
- Ensuring that the LAST is equipped to monitor the training needs of staff within their school, seek out relevant training which they disseminate within their school setting
- Ensuring that the LAST is given enough time to competently carry out their role of mentoring other staff and upskilling staff in undertaking assessment, accommodation and adjustments.
- Ensuring LASTs have access specialist knowledge and expertise provided centrally

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It is recommended that professional development in relation to the 'Every Student, Every School' initiative be revised in terms of content, mode of delivery and timeliness to encourage greater participation by school staff in NSW. Real change in inclusive education needs to embedded in classroom practices and classroom teacher (current and future) need to be supported to achieve this change.

This recommendation can be achieved by being:

- Appropriate and responsive to local need
- Accessible within school hours
- Available on demand

- Provided in a blended delivery mode consisting of both online and face to face session
- Focused on content, for example educating about autism, mental health and other disabilities, but also encourage the learning and practicing of practical strategies for use in the classroom.

## HARNESSING THE EXPERTISE OF SCHOOLS FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

It is recommended that the project undertaken by SSPs be widely publicised and available so that mainstream schools can benefit from their expertise.

This recommendation can be achieved by:

- Exploring the possibility of giving access to the projects via a website to enable viewing by teachers in schools all across the state
- Marketing the SSP projects to all schools in NSW

Considerations for this recommendation include:

- Ensuring that all the SSP projects have been completed
- Ensuring the relevance of the information and format for use in mainstream classrooms
- Raising a discussion within education forums about the place for these projects in the mainstream curriculum
- Launching the projects to ensure widespread knowledge of their existence and value

## REGIONAL NETWORKS

It is recommended that DEC actively support the development of local and regional networks to minimise duplication and maximise sharing of expertise.

This recommendation can be achieved by:

- Active participation by DEC staff in networks to facilitate greater communication between the Department and schools about the progress of ESES
- Providing specific resources to schools to enable participation of LAST staff in regional networks
- Establishing regional resource databases accessible to schools
- Providing access to specialist knowledge and expertise provided centrally as required

## ONGOING MONITORING

The study highlighted marked diversity in terms of knowledge, capacity and implementation of the ESES initiative. Whilst the recommendations above seek to address some of the issues currently facing schools in creating inclusive education these are not static and new challenges will emerge.

It is recommended that:

- The Teachers Federation and the Department develop mechanisms to monitor the implementation of ESES over the next five years.
- The Teachers Federation and the Department monitor student cohort data to ensure schools have access to appropriate levels of resources to support educational inclusion.
- Further research is undertaken with parents to ensure their experiences are better understood and practices changed accordingly.

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**Examining the Impact of Education Reform**

**Interview schedule for Principals**

Introductions and information about the study.

Give out Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form. Ask permission to record interview and obtain signed consent.

**Previous experience**

Can you tell me about your experiences of teaching students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**?  This was before the implementation of the Every Student, Every School initiative. This was during the time when schools received funding for students with 'low level' need who were eligible to access up to $6,400 in Integration Support funding.

Prompts:
- What was the process for recognizing students in need of assistance?
- What types of services were provided to these students?
- Who provided these services?
- How were the services evaluated?

- How were funding decisions made regarding funding services for students with additional learning and support needs?
- What kind of training did you receive in working with students with additional learning and support needs?

What were the strengths of the approach used with students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**?

Prompts:
- What worked well?
- Why did this approach work well?

What were the weaknesses of the approach used with students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**?

Prompts:
- What didn't work well?
- Why was this approach not so successful?

## Current experience – 'Every Student, Every School' (ESES)

Can you tell me what you know about the ESES framework?

Prompts:
- How did you gain this knowledge? Have you received any training about ESES? What kind of training have you received?
- What other types of training would have been helpful?

Can you tell me how the ESES framework operates in your school?

Prompts:
- How are students assessed?
- What does the assessment process involve?
- Who is involved in the assessment process? Is there much collaboration between staff members?
- Who decides what kind of support is given to the student?
- How is this monitored/evaluated?
- How are funding decisions made regarding funding services for students with additional learning and support needs? Who decides how the funds spent? On what basis?
- What kind of training do teachers get?
- Can you describe the involvement of parents in the assessment process of students requiring additional learning and support? How far do you think parent's contribution is facilitated under ESES?
- Is there any support being provided by Schools for Specific Purpose (SSP) in your school? Is your school, for example benefitting from a SSP project?

What do see as the strengths of the ESES framework?

Prompts:
- What works well?
- Why do you think this approach works well?

- What are the benefits of this approach?


What do you see as the weaknesses of the ESES framework?

Prompts:
- What doesn't work well?
- Why doesn't this approach work well?
- What are the weaknesses of this approach?


What do you see as the opportunities for the ESES framework?

What do you see as the challenges of the ESES framework?

**Services in the future**

How do you think students with additional learning and support needs will be catered for in the future?

Prompts:
- Will it be similar to now? Will ESES exist in the future?
- Will there be a different model for service provision? What might this look like?


Overall, what advice would you give to staff in the Department of Education and Communities about the ESES framework?

Do you have any other comments relation to students who require additional learning assistance and support in your school that you would like considered in this study?

Prompt:
- Anything we haven't covered that you would like to add?


**Demographic information - to be collected in writing at the end of the interview**

1. What is your gender?   Male……… ☐  Female………..☐
2. Is your school situated in a: City area……☐   Regional area ……. ☐   Rural/remote area …….
   ☐

3. What is the size of your school?


   25 or less enrolments……. ☐    26 – 159 enrolments…… ☐     160 – 300 enrolments……☐

   301 – 450 enrolments……. ☐    451 – 700 enrolments….. ☐     701 - 899 enrolments…….☐

   More than 900 enrolments   ☐

4. What is the classification of your school according to Department of Education and Communities guidelines?....................................................

5. How would you describe your student population?

Culturally and linguistically diverse……….…… ...................☐
High number of Indigenous students ……………. .............☐
Predominantly English speaking students……………… ..☐
.....................................

6. What proportion of your students are from Non English Speaking Backgrounds?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0 - 10% ……………… ☐ | 11 - 20%……………… ☐ | 21 - 30% ..................... ☐ |
| 31 - 40% ..................☐ | 4 1 – 50%....................☐ | 51 - 60% ..................... ☐ |
| 61 – 70% ..................☐ | 71 -80%........................☐ | 81 – 90% ..................... ☐ |
| 91 – 100%.................☐ | | |

7. How many students with a confirmed disability are currently enrolled in your
   school?........................

8. The number of years you have been teaching:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 years  ..................☐ | 3-4 years  ....................☐ | 5-9 years  .................... ☐ |
| 10-14 years  .............☐ | 15-19 years.................☐ | 20+ years .................... ☐ |

9. In how many schools have you held teaching positions?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 position………………☐ | 2 positions……. ……….☐ | 3 |
| positions……………. ☐ | | |
| 4-6 positions…………☐ | 7-10 positions………….☐ | 10+ positions  .....………..☐ |

10. ....................................Does your school have support classes on site?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes ……………….. ..☐ | No ………………........☐ | Don't know……………. ☐ |

   (a) If yes, how many support classes do you have on site?  ……...

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY**

**Faculty of Education and Social Work**

### Examining the Impact of Education Reform

**Interview schedule for Classroom Teachers**

Introductions and information about the study.

Give out Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form. Ask permission to record interview and obtain signed consent.

**Previous experience**

Can you tell me about your experiences of teaching students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**?  This was before the implementation of the Every Student, Every School initiative.  This was during the time when schools received funding for students with 'low level' need who were eligible to access up to $6,400 in Integration Support funding.

Prompts:
- What was the process for recognizing students in need of assistance?
- What types of services were provided to these students?
- Who provided these services?
- How were the services evaluated?
- What kind of training did you receive in working with students with additional learning and support needs?

What were the strengths of the approach used with students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**?

Prompts:
- What worked well?

- Why did this approach work well?

What were the weaknesses of the approach used with students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**?

Prompts:
- What didn't work well?
- Why was this approach not so successful?

**Current experience – 'Every Student, Every School' (ESES)**

Can you tell me what you know about the ESES framework?

Prompts:
- How did you gain this knowledge? Have you received any training about ESES? What kind of training have you received?
- What other types of training would have been helpful?

Can you tell me how the ESES framework operates in your school?

Prompts:
- How are students assessed?
- What does the assessment process involve?
- Who is involved in the assessment process? Is there much collaboration between staff members?
- Who decides what kind of support is given to the student?
- How is this monitored/evaluated?
- What kind of training do teachers get?
- Can you describe the involvement of parents in the assessment process of their child? How far do you think parent's contribution is facilitated under ESES?
- Is there any support being provided by Schools for Specific Purpose (SSP) in your school? Is your school, for example benefitting from a SSP project?

What do see as the strengths of the ESES framework?

Prompts:
- What works well?
- Why do you think this approach works well?
- What are the benefits of this approach?

What do you see as the weaknesses of the ESES framework?

Prompts:
- What doesn't work well?
- Why doesn't this approach work well?
- What are the weaknesses of this approach?

What do you see as the opportunities for the ESES framework?

What do you see as the challenges of the ESES framework?

**Services in the future**

How do you think students with additional learning and support needs will be catered for in the future?

Prompts:
- Will it be similar to now? Will ESES exist in the future?
- Will there be a different model for service provision? What might this look like?

Overall, what advice would you give to staff in the Department of Education and Communitites about the ESES framework?

Do you have any other comments relation to students who require additional learning assistance and support in your school that you would like considered in this study?

Prompt:
- Anything we haven't covered that you would like to add?

**Demographic information - to be collected in writing at the end of the interview**

1. What is your gender?    Male……… ☐   Female…………☐

2. Is your school situated in a: City area……☐   Regional area ……. ☐   Rural/remote area ……. ☐

3. What is your employment status?

4. Temporary…………….☐          Permanent ……………. ☐          Casual ………………… ☐ ........

5. Do you work?

   Part time ………………. ☐          Full time……………….. ☐

6.  The number of years you have been teaching?

   | 1-2 years  .................☐ | 3-4 years  ..................☐ | 5-9 years  ..................☐ |
   | 10-14 years  .................☐ | 15-19 years .................☐ | 20+ years ...................☐ |

7. In how many schools have you held teaching positions?

   | 1 position………………☐ | 2 positions……. ……….☐ | 3 positions…………. ☐ |
   | 4-6 positions.. …………☐ | 7-10 positions………….☐ | 10+ positions ....... ……☐ |

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY**

**Faculty of Education and
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**Examining the Impact of Education Reform**

**Interview schedule for Parents**

Introductions and information about the study.

Give out Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form. Ask permission to record interview and obtain signed consent.

**Previous experience**

Can you begin by telling me about when your child with additional learning and support needs received support in school **prior to April 2012**?  This was before the implementation of the Every Student, Every School initiative.  This was during the time when schools received funding for students with 'low level' need who were eligible to access up to $6,400 in Integration Support funding.

Prompts:
- Can you tell me what kinds of support or assistance your child required at school during this time (before April 2014)?
- What was the process for recognizing your child needed some assistance in school?
- What types of services were provided to your child?
- Who provided these services?
- How were the services evaluated?
- What difference do you think the services made to your child?
- What difference did the services make to you?

What were the strengths of the approach used with your child **prior to April 2012**?

Prompts:
- What worked well?
- Why do you think this approach work well?

What were the weaknesses of the approach used with your child **prior to April 2012**?

Prompts:
- What didn't work well?
- Why do you think this approach not so successful?

**Current experience – 'Every Student, Every School' (ESES)**

Can you tell me what you know about the ESES framework?

Prompts:
- How did you gain this knowledge? Did it come from the school or did you hear about it in other ways?
- If they haven't heard about ESES – explain what it is and ask what they think about this approach?
- What other types of information about ESES would have been helpful for you as a parent?
- Whose responsibility is it, do you think, to communicate about changes in how services are delivered to your child?
- What is the best method of communicating these changes to you as a parent?

Can you tell me about the process you and your child went through in order to receive additional learning assistance or support?

Prompts:
- How was your child assessed?
- What did the assessment process involve?
- Who undertook the assessment?
- Did there seem to be much collaboration between staff members in relation to supporting your child? If so, how was this evident to you?
- Can you describe the involvement of parents in the assessment process of your child? How far do you think parent's contribution is facilitated under ESES?
- Do you know who decides what kind of support is given to your child?
- Do you know how your child is monitored/evaluated while receiving support?
- Do you know what kind of training teachers get who work with your child and others in the school with additional learning and support needs?
- If your child has changed schools or gone from primary to secondary school, can you explain what kind of transition occurred in service provision?

What do see as the strengths of the ESES framework?

Prompts:
- What works well with your child currently?
- Why do you think this approach works well?
- What are the benefits of this approach for you?
- What are the benefits of this approach for your child?

What do you see as the weaknesses of the ESES framework?

Prompts:
- What doesn't work well for your child
- What doesn't work well for you?
- Why doesn't this approach work well?
- What are the weaknesses of this approach?

As a parent, what do you see as the opportunities in relation to how services are currently delivered to your child?

Prompts:

- What could be done differently to make a greater impact for you and your child?

What do you see as the challenges of delivering services using the ESES framework?

Prompts:

- What are the difficulties with delivering services in this way?

## Services in the future

How do you think additional learning and support services will be delivered to your child in the future?

Prompts:
- Will it be similar to now? Will ESES exist in the future?
- Will there be a different model for service provision? What might this look like?

Overall, what feedback would you give to staff in the Department of Education and Communities about your thoughts and experiences of the ESES framework?

Do you have any other comments in relation to how your child currently receives additional learning assistance and support in your school that you would like to make?

Prompt:
- Anything we haven't covered that you would like to add?

## Demographic information - to be collected in writing at the end of the interview

1. What is your gender?   Male……… ☐   Female…………☐
2. What is the age of your child?...........
3. What is the gender of your child?     Male……… ☐   Female…………☐
4. Is your child an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?     Yes……… ☐   No …………☐

5. Is your school situated in a: City area……☐   Regional area ……. ☐   Rural/remote area …….
☐

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**Faculty of Education and Social Work**

**Examining the Impact of Education Reform**

**Interview schedule for Learning and Support Teachers/Learning and Support Team Coordinators**

Introductions and information about the study.

Give out Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form. Ask permission to record interview and obtain signed consent.

**Previous experience**

1. Can you tell me about your experiences of teaching students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**? This was before the implementation of the Every Student, Every School initiative. This was during the time when schools received funding for students with 'low level' need who were eligible to access up to $6,400 in Integration Support funding.

Prompts:
- What was the process for recognizing students in need of assistance?
- What types of services were provided to these students?
- Who provided these services?
- How were the services evaluated?
- What kind of training did you receive in working with students with additional learning and support needs?

2. What were the strengths of the approach used with students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**?

Prompts:
- What worked well?
- Why did this approach work well?

3. What were the weaknesses of the approach used with students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**?

Prompts:
- What didn't work well?
- Why was this approach not so successful?

**Current experience – 'Every Student, Every School' (ESES)**

4. Can you tell me what you know about the ESES framework?

Prompts:
- How did you gain this knowledge? Have you received any training about ESES? What kind of training have you received?
- What other types of training would have been helpful?

5. Can you tell me how the ESES framework operates in your school?

Prompts:
- How are students assessed?
- What does the assessment process involve?
- Who is involved in the assessment process? Is there much collaboration between staff members?
- Who decides what kind of support is given to the student?
- How is this monitored/evaluated?
- What kind of training do you get? What kind of training do other staff get?
- Can you describe the involvement of parents in the assessment process of their child? How far do you think parent's contribution is facilitated under ESES?
- Is there any support being provided by Schools for Specific Purpose (SSP) in your school? Is your school, for example benefitting from a SSP project?

6. What do see as the strengths of the ESES framework?

Prompts:
- What works well?
- Why do you think this approach works well?
- What are the benefits of this approach?

7. What do you see as the weaknesses of the ESES framework?

Prompts:
- What doesn't work well?
- Why doesn't this approach work well?
- What are the weaknesses of this approach?

8. What do you see as the opportunities for the ESES framework?

9. What do you see as the challenges of the ESES framework?

**Services in the future**

10. How do you think students with additional learning and support needs will be catered for in the future?

Prompts:
- Will it be similar to now? Will ESES exist in the future?
- Will there be a different model for service provision? What might this look like?

11. Overall, what advice would you give to people in the Department of Education and Communities about the ESES framework?

12. Do you have any other comments relation to students who require additional learning assistance and support in your school that you would like considered in this study?

Prompt:
- Anything we haven't covered that you would like to add?

**Demographic information - to be collected in writing at the end of the interview**

8. What is your gender?    Male……… ☐   Female………… ☐

9. Is your school situated in a: City area…… ☐   Regional area ……. ☐   Rural/remote area ……. ☐

10. ..................................... What is your employment status?

11. ..................................... Temporary………................……☐           Permanent …………… ☐ Casual ………………. ☐.............................

12. ..................................... Do you work?

   Part time ……………. ☐           Full time………………. ☐

13.        The number of years you have been teaching?

   1-2 years  ................☐        3-4 years  ...................☐        5-9 years  ...................☐

   10-14 years  ................☐        15-19 years .................☐        20+ years ....................☐

14. ..................................... In how many schools have you held teaching positions?

   1 position……………☐        2 positions…… ………☐        3 positions .................☐

   4-6 positions.. …………☐        7-10 positions…………☐        10+ positions ....... ……☐

**Examining the Impact of Education Reform**

**PRINCIPAL/EXECUTIVE STAFF**

The Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney is trying to gain a picture of the learning assistance and support available in our schools to children with a disability, learning difficulties or behaviour support needs. Obviously, as a Principal, your perspective is most important to us and we stand to learn a great deal from your experiences and observations. Any information that you give us will be treated as confidential and, in so far as we later publicly cite any of your comments, they will be attributed to a broad category of authorship such as 'a rural school Principal' or 'a city-based Principal.' Self-evidently there is no obligation on you to assist our project, but your participation would be highly valued.

***Where YES/NO appears, please circle your answer.***
References to the 'Every Student, Every School' framework encompass non-routine learning assistance and support, which refers to that which was provided to students with 'low level' need who, prior to the implementation of 'Every Student, Every School' would have been eligible to access up to $6,400 in Integration Support funding.

**1.**   Since **Term 2 of 2012** has your school received additional funds:
**1(a)** Through a National Partnership ............................................................................... ***YES/ NO***
**1(b)** Through the Priority Schools Funding Program (transitional arrangements) .......................... ***YES/ NO***
**1(c)** As a Priority Action School (transitional arrangements) .......................................... ***YES/ NO***

**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE**
**2.**   Prior to the implementation of the Every Student, Every School initiative in **April 2012,** what services (supported by DEC) did you provide to students with additional learning and support needs in your school?  Please tick the box yes/no/unsure or not applicable for each service listed.

| Service supported by DEC | Yes | No | Unsure | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| i.     Help with literacy | | | | |
| ii.    Help with numeracy | | | | |
| iii.   Help with behaviour | | | | |
| **Service supported by DEC** | **Yes** | **No** | **Unsure** | **Not applicable** |
| iv.    Help with communication | | | | |
| v.     Hearing support services | | | | |
| vi.    Vision support services | | | | |
| vii.   Hydrotherapy | | | | |
| viii.  Additional classroom teacher support | | | | |
| ix.    Additional support from the Learning and Support Teacher (LAST) | | | | |
| x.     Additional support from the Learning and Support Officer (SLSO) | | | | |
| xi.    Parent support | | | | |
| xii.   Other – please specify | | | | |

**1(b)**   Please identify the assistance or support that services that were provided to the student, prior the implementation of the Every Student, Every School initiative, that were provided by agencies outside of the remit of NSW DEC.  Please tick the box yes/no/unsure or not applicable for each service listed.

| Service provided (agencies external to | Yes | No | Unsure | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **DEC)** | | | | | |
| I. Speech Therapy | | | | | |
| II. Occupational Therapy | | | | | |
| III. Physiotherapy | | | | | |
| IV Hydrotherapy | | | | | |
| V Other – please specify | | | | | |

**3.** How did you feel your school met the requirements of students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**? Please circle your response.
  - (i) Not at all confident
  - (ii) I had misgivings
  - (iii) Secure in what was delivered
  - (iv) Very confident
  - (v) Don't know

**4.** How satisfied did you feel with how services were provided to **teachers** who taught students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**? Please circle your response.
  - (i) Dissatisfied
  - (ii) Mostly dissatisfied
  - (iii) Mostly satisfied
  - (iv) Satisfied
  - (v) Don't know

**5.** How satisfied did you feel with the way in which services were provided to **students** with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**? Please circle your response.
  - (i) Dissatisfied
  - (ii) Mostly dissatisfied
  - (iii) Mostly satisfied
  - (iv) Satisfied
  - (v) Don't know

**5(a)** Why? ------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**CURRENT EXPERIENCE – 'Every Student, Every School'**

**6.** How is learning assistance and support being implemented in your school as part of the 'Every Student, Every School' framework?
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**7.** What do **you** envisage being achieved through the 'Every Student, Every School' framework?
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**7(a)** What do **the staff** generally in your school envisage being achieved through the 'Every Student, Every School' framework?
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**8.** What kind of training and information have you received in relation to the 'Every Student, Every School' framework?
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**8(a)** How do you **currently** feel about meeting the requirements of students who require additional learning and support at your school?
  - (i) Not at all confident
  - (ii) Low in confidence
  - (iii) Confident
  - (iv) Very confident
  - (v) Don't know

**9.** Would you say the additional learning assistance and support services **currently** provided to **students** in your school are? Please circle your response.
  - (i) more available now than in the past
  - (ii) about the same
  - (iii) less available than in the past

**10.** Would you say the additional learning assistance and support services **currently** provided to **teachers** in your school are? Please circle your response.
  - (i) more available now than in the past

(ii)     about the same
(iii)    less available than in the past

**11.** What challenges, if any, exist to the successful implementation of the 'Every Student, Every School' framework in your school? Please specify.

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## DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION AWARENESS

**12.** Have you been provided with training about the objectives of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>?

*YES / NO. [If **NO**, go to question **12(b)**]*

If **YES**, respond to question **12(a)**

**12(a)** What is the depth of your understanding of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>? Please circle your response.

(i)      Poor
(ii)     Limited
(iii)    Good
(iv)    Very good
(v)     Don't Know

If **NO,**

**12(b)** How important do you consider an understanding of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education?</u> Please circle your response.

(i)      Not at all important
(ii)     Low importance
(iii)    Neither important nor unimportant
(iv)    Moderately important
(v)     Very important
(vi)    Don't know

**13.** How consistent are the existing 'Every Student, Every School' arrangements in your school with the objectives of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>? Please circle your response.

(i)      Inconsistent
(ii)     Low in consistency
(iii)    Moderately consistent
(iv)    Very consistent
(v)     Don't know

**13(a)** Comment?

------------------------------------------------------------

**14.** How do you rate **your school's** capacity to meet the legislative requirements of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u> with the resources available? Please circle your response.

(i)      Poor
(ii)     Limited
(iii)    Good
(iv)    Very good
(v)     Don't Know

**15.** Taking into consideration your obligations under the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u>, including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>, how has the 'Every Student, Every School' framework enhanced **your** capacity to meet the needs of students requiring additional learning assistance and support? Please circle your response.

(i)      Not at all enhanced
(ii)     Slightly enhanced
(iii)    Moderately enhanced
(iv)    Highly enhanced
(v)     Don't know

**15(a)** If enhanced, please describe how your capacity has been enhanced?

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**15(b)** If not enhanced, please describe why you feel your capacity has not been enhanced?

------------------------------------------------------------

**15(c)** What do you wish to see provided to enhance your capacity?

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**THE FUTURE**
**16.** What improvements, if any, do you think could be made to better support **students** with additional learning and support needs in your school?

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**17.** What improvements, if any, do you think could be made to better support **teachers** who teach students with additional learning and support needs in your school?

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**DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS**
**Please indicate your response by ticking the appropriate box:**
**18.** What is your gender?   Male……… ☐  Female…………☐
**19.** Are you Principal/Executive Teacher in a:
Primary School……… ☐  Secondary School ………☐  Combined Primary/Secondary School……☐
**20.** Is your school situated in a: City area……☐  Regional area ……. ☐  Rural/remote area ……. ☐
**21**. What is the postcode of your school? ……………………..
**22.** What is the size of your school?
25 or less enrolments……. ☐    26 – 159 enrolments…… ☐    160 – 300 enrolments…… ☐
301 – 450 enrolments……. ☐    451 – 700 enrolments….. ☐    701 - 899 enrolments……. ☐
More than 900 enrolments    ☐
**23.** What is the classification of your school according to Department of Education and Communities guidelines?......................................................
**24.** How would you describe your student population?
Culturally and linguistically diverse……………....................☐
High number of Indigenous students ……………. ................☐
Predominantly English speaking students………………… .....☐
**25.** What proportion of your students are from Non English Speaking Backgrounds?
0 - 10% ……………… ☐        11 - 20%………………☐        21 - 30% .....................☐
31 - 40% .....................☐       4 1 – 50%.....................☐       51 - 60% .....................☐
61 – 70% .....................☐      71 -80%.......................☐      81 – 90% .....................☐
91 – 100%...................☐
**26**. The number of years you have been teaching:
1-2 years .....................☐        3-4 years ....................☐        5-9 years ................... ☐
10-14 years ................☐       15-19 years .................☐       20+ years ................... ☐
**27.** In how many schools have you held teaching positions?
 1 position………………☐        2 positions……. ……….☐        3 positions…………..…☐
4-6 positions.. …………☐        7-10 positions………….☐        10+ positions ..………..☐
**28.** Does your school have support classes on site?
Yes ………………......☐        No ………………........☐        Don't know…………… ☐
**28(a)** If yes, how many support classes do you have on site?  ……...

*Thank you for giving us the benefit of your experience.*
*It will be of great assistance to our project.*

*If you would like to win a registration to the NSW Teachers Federation conference/University of Sydney conference plus paid release time, please send an email to* *alexandra.young@sydney.edu.au* *with "Conference Prize/Voucher" as the subject heading. Please email your name and contact telephone number to go in the prize draw.*

*Thanks again for your help.*

**Examining the Impact of Education Reform**

**Parent Survey**

The Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney is trying to gain a picture of the learning assistance and support available in our schools to children with a disability, learning difficulties or behaviour support needs. We believe that we can learn a great deal from the experiences and observations of parents. So, we would very much appreciate your time to enable us to learn from your observations. The information that you give us will remain anonymous and we do not need to record your name or any other identifying details. On a confidential basis the Principal has helped us to draw a sample of children and the only identifying information that we have concerning your child – the one upon whom we ask you to base your answers in this survey - is that the child's given name is

and that she or he is in Year_____ .   Please understand that there is no obligation on you to assist us, but your participation would be highly valued if you feel able to give it.

***Where YES/NO appears, please circle your answer.***

References to the 'Every Student, Every School' framework encompass non-routine learning assistance and support, which refers to that which was provided to students with 'low level' need who, prior to the implementation of 'Every Student, Every School' in April 2012, would have been eligible to access up to $6,400 in Integration Support funding.

The Principal has identified that you have a child in the school who needs additional learning assistance or support. *If you have more than one such student, please base your comments on the one most in need of learning assistance or support.*

**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE**

**1.**   Prior to the implementation of the Every Student, Every School initiative in **April 2012**, did your child **ever need** additional learning assistance or support?

   ***YES /NO [****If **NO,** go to question **3]**

**2.**   Was learning assistance or support provided to your child?

   ***YES/NO*  [**If **NO,** go to question **2(e)]**

   If ***YES***:

**2(a)** Describe the type of assistance or support that was provided to your child prior to the implementation of the Every Student, Every School initiative in April, 2012, and supported by NSW DEC. Please tick the box yes/no/unsure or not applicable for each service listed.

| Service supported by DEC | Yes | No | Unsure | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| i. Help with literacy | | | | |
| ii. Help with numeracy | | | | |
| iii. Help with behaviour | | | | |
| iv. Help with communication | | | | |
| v. Hearing support services | | | | |
| vi. Vision support services | | | | |
| vii. Additional classroom teacher support | | | | |
| viii. Additional support from the Learning and Support Teacher (LAST) | | | | |
| ix. Additional support from the Learning and Support Officer (SLSO) | | | | |
| x. Parent support | | | | |
| xi. Other – please specify | | | | |

**1(b)** Please identify the assistance or support that services that were provided to the student, prior the implementation of the Every Student, Every School initiative, that were provided by agencies outside of the remit of NSW DEC. Please tick the box yes/no/unsure or not applicable for each service listed.

| Service provided (agencies external to DEC) | Yes | No | Unsure | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I. Speech Therapy | | | | |
| II. Occupational Therapy | | | | |
| III. Physiotherapy | | | | |
| IV Hydrotherapy | | | | |
| V Other – please specify | | | | |

**2(b)** What was the role of the individual or individuals who were involved in organising or providing the assistance and/or support? Please specify.

........................................................................................................................................

**2(c)** How satisfied did you feel with the assistance and support provided to your child? Please circle your response.

(i) Completely dissatisfied
(ii) Somewhat dissatisfied
(iv) Somewhat satisfied
(v) Completely satisfied
(vi) Don't know

**2(d)** Why? .....................................................................................................................

If **NO:**

**2(e)** Why was no additional learning assistance and support provided to your child?

........................................................................................................................................

**CURRENT EXPERIENCE – 'Every Student, Every School'**

**Please answer questions 3 to 10 based on what has happened <u>in 2013 and 2014.</u>**

**3.** How aware are you of the current opportunities for learning support in your child's school? Please circle your response.

    (i)      Not at all aware
    (ii)     Slightly aware
    (iii)    Moderately aware
    (iv)    Very aware
    (v)     Don't know

**4.** Over the last 24 months **(since April 2012)** has there been a time when your child received additional learning assistance and support?

    *YES/ NO*: [*If NO, go to question 5*]

    If *YES*:

**4(a)** Could you describe the type of assistance or support that your child needed? Please tick the box yes/no/unsure or not applicable for each service listed.

| Assistance or support needed | Yes | No | Unsure | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| i.   Literacy support | | | | |
| ii.   Numeracy support | | | | |
| iii.   Behavioural support | | | | |
| iv.   Emotional support | | | | |
| v.   Help with social skills | | | | |
| vi.   Help with mobility | | | | |
| vii.   Communication and language support | | | | |
| viii.   Hearing support services | | | | |
| ix.   Vision support services | | | | |
| x.   Other – please specify | | | | |

**4(b)** How did the need for additional learning assistance and support become evident to the school? Please circle your response.

    (i)      Raised by Parents/you
    (ii)     Raised by the School Executive
    (iii)    Raised by Student Welfare Officer
    (iv)    Raised by Teacher
    (v)     Raised by Child
    (vi)    Raised by Other - please specify

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**4(c)** What learning assistance or support is **currently** provided to your child? Please tick the box yes/no/unsure or not applicable for each service listed.

| Service provided | Yes | No | Unsure | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| i. Learning and Support Teacher (LAST) assessment | | | | |
| ii. Extra School Learning and Support Officer (SLSO) support | | | | |
| iii Development of a personalised learning and support plan | | | | |
| iv. Received additional resources | | | | |
| v. Session with therapist | | | | |
| vi. Other – please specify | | | | |

**4(d)** Who **currently** provides this learning assistance and support to your child? Please circle your response. You can select more than one answer.
(i) Learning and Support Teacher (LAST)
(ii) School Learning and Support Officer (SLSO)
(iii) Classroom Teacher
(iv) ESL Teacher
(v) Parent
(vi) Volunteer
(vii) Peer
(viii) Other – please specify

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**4(e)** What has been the outcome for your child? Please circle your response.

(i) Hardly any improvement
(ii) Slightly improvement
(iii) Good improvement
(iv) Significant improvement
(v) Don't know

**4(f)** How satisfied do you feel about the outcome for your child? Please circle your response.

(i) Completely dissatisfied
(ii) Somewhat dissatisfied
(iii) Somewhat satisfied
(iv) Completely satisfied
(v) Don't know

**4(g)** Why? -----------------------------------------------------------------------

If *NO*:

**5.** What were the reasons why your child did not receive additional learning assistance and support? Please specify.

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**6.** As a parent, how involved do you feel in decision making regarding the learning and support needs of your child? Please circle your response.

(i) Not at all involved
(ii) Slightly involved
(iii) Moderately involved
(iv) Very involved
(v) Don't know
(vi) Other – please specify -----------------------------------------------

7. Would you say the additional learning assistance and support services provided to your child **currently** are? Please circle your response.

   (i)     more available now than in the past
   (ii)    about the same
   (iii)   less available than in the past

8. Would you say the additional learning assistance and support services **currently** provided to **teachers** in your school are? Please circle your response.
   (i)     more available now than in the past
   (ii)    about the same
   (iii)   less available than in the past

9. What challenges, if any, exist to the successful implementation of the 'Every Student, Every School'     framework in your school? Please comment.

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10. In your opinion, who decides how funds are allocated and spent to deliver additional learning assistance and support in your child's school?

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## DISABILITY DISCRIMATION AWARENESS

11. Have you been provided with training of the objectives of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u>  and the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>?

    ***YES / NO [****If **NO,** go to question **11(b)]***

    If **YES**,

11(a) What is the depth of your understanding of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>? Please circle your response.

    (i)     Poor

    (ii)    Limited

    (iii)   Good

    (iv)    Very good

    (v)     Don't know

If **NO**,

**11(b)** How important do you consider an understanding of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>? Please circle your response.

    (vii)    Not at all important

    (viii)    Low importance

    (ix)    Moderately important

    (x)    Very important

    (xi)    Don't know

**12.** How consistent are the existing 'Every Student, Every School' arrangements in your school with the objectives of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>? Please circle your response.

    (vi)    Inconsistent

    (vii)    Low in consistency

    (viii)    Moderately consistent

    (ix)    Very consistent

    (x)    Don't know

**12(a)** Comment?

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**13.** How do you rate **your school's capacity** to meet the legislative requirements of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u> with the resources available? Please circle your response.

    (i)    Poor

    (ii)    Fair

    (iii)    Good

    (iv)    Very good

    (v)    Don't know

**THE FUTURE**

**14.** What improvements, if any, do you think could be made to better support **students** with additional learning and support needs in your school?

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**15.** What improvements, if any, do you think could be made to better support **teachers** who teach students with a disability and additional learning and support needs in your school?

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**DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS**

**Please indicate your response by ticking the appropriate box:**

What is your gender?   Male……… ☐  Female………… ☐

Are you from a Non English Speaking Background?   Yes……… ☐   No ………… ☐

What is the age of your child?.................

What is the gender of your child?          Male……… ☐  Female………… ☐

Is your child an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?   Yes……… ☐   No ………… ☐

Does your child attend?

Primary School……… ☐ Secondary School ………… ☐ Combined Primary/Secondary School…… ☐

Is your school situated in a: City area…… ☐   Regional area ……. ☐     Rural/remote area ……. ☐

What is the postcode of your school? Please specify …………………..

What is the number of students in your child's class:……………

*Thank you for giving us the benefit of your experience.*

*It will be of great assistance to our project.*

*If you would like to win a dinner voucher for two plus babysitting costs (valued at $150.00/$100) please send an email to Alexandra.young@sydney.edu.au with "Dinner Prize/Voucher" as the subject heading. Please email your name and contact telephone number to go in the prize draw.*

*Thanks again for your help.*

**Examining the Impact of Education Reform**

**Class Teacher Survey**

The Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney is trying to gain a picture of the learning assistance and support available in our schools to children with a disability, learning difficulties or behaviour support needs. We believe that we can learn a great deal from the experiences and observations of teachers. So, we would very much appreciate your time to enable us to learn from your observations. The information that you give us will remain anonymous and we do not need to record your name or any other identifying details. The only identifying information that we have concerning you is that you are a classroom teacher at your school. Please understand that there is no obligation on you to assist us, but your participation would be highly valued if you feel able to give it.

***Where YES/NO appears, please circle your answer.***

References to the 'Every Student, Every School' framework encompass non-routine learning assistance and support, which refers to that which was provided to students with 'low level' need who, prior to the implementation of 'Every Student, Every School' in April 2012, would have been eligible to access up to $6,400 in Integration Support funding.

The Principal has identified that you have a child in your class who needs additional learning assistance or support. *If you have more than one such student, please base your comments on the one most in need of learning assistance or support.*

**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE**

1.    In the past, **before April 2012** - did you have a student in your class who had additional learning and support needs?

   *YES/NO* [If *NO*, go to question **5**]

   If *YES*:

1(a)   Please identify the assistance or support services that were provided to the student, prior to the implementation of the Every Student, Every School initiative I April 2012, and supported by NSW DEC.   Please tick the box yes/no/unsure or not applicable for each service listed.

| Service supported by DEC | Yes | No | Unsure | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Help with literacy | | | | |
| Help with numeracy | | | | |
| Help with communication | | | | |
| Service provided by DEC | Yes | No | Unsure | Not applicable |
| Hearing support services | | | | |
| Vision support services | | | | |
| Additional classroom teacher support | | | | |
| Additional support from the Learning and Support Teacher (LAST) | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Additional support from the Learning and Support Officer (SLSO) | | | | |
| Parent support | | | | |
| Other – please specify | | | | |

**1(b)** Please identify the assistance or support that services that were provided to the student, prior the implementation of the Every Student, Every School initiative, that were provided by agencies outside of the remit of NSW DEC. Please tick the box yes/no/unsure or not applicable for each service listed.

| Service provided (agencies external to DEC) | Yes | No | Unsure | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I. Speech Therapy | | | | |
| II. Occupational Therapy | | | | |
| III. Physiotherapy | | | | |
| IV Hydrotherapy | | | | |
| V Other – please specify | | | | |

**1(b)** What was the role of the individual or individuals who were involved in organising or providing the assistance and/or support? Please specify.

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**2.** How did you feel your school met the requirements of students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**? Please circle your response.

- (i) Not at all confident
- (ii) I had misgivings
- (iii) Secure in what was delivered
- (iv) Very confident
- (v) Don't know

**3.** How satisfied did you feel with the assistance and support provided **to you** as the child's teacher **prior to April 2012**. Please circle your response.
- (i) Dissatisfied
- (ii) Mostly dissatisfied
- (iii) Mostly satisfied
- (iv) Satisfied
- (v) Don't know

**3(a)** Why? -----

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**4.** How satisfied did you feel with the way in which services were provided to **students** with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**? Please circle your response.

- (i) Dissatisfied

- (ii) Mostly dissatisfied

(iii)     Mostly satisfied

(iv)     Satisfied

(v)     Don't know

**4(a)**  Why? ..............................................................................................................................

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**CURRENT EXPERIENCE – 'Every Student, Every School'**

**Please answer questions 5 to 17 based on what has happened <u>in 2013 and 2014.</u> You can choose a different student to discuss in this section.**

**5.**    How aware are you of the **current** opportunities for students who require additional learning assistance and support in your school? Please circle your response.

(i)     Not at all aware

(ii)    Slightly aware

(iii)   Moderately aware

(iv)   Very aware

(v)    Don't know

**6.**    Over the last 24 months **(since April 2012)** could you describe the level of importance of the type of additional learning assistance or support that the student needed to participate in class? Please tick the box not important/somewhat important/very important or not applicable for each support listed.

| Support needed | Not important | Somewhat important | Very important | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Literacy support | | | | |
| Numeracy support | | | | |
| Behavioural support | | | | |
| Emotional support | | | | |
| Help with social skills | | | | |
| Help with mobility | | | | |
| Communication and language support | | | | |
| Hearing support services | | | | |
| Vision support services | | | | |
| Other – please specify | | | | |

**6(a)**  How did the need for additional support become evident to the school? Please circle your response. You can select more than one answer.

(i)     Raised by Teacher/you
(ii)    Raised by the School Executive

(iii)       Raised by Student Welfare Officer
(iv)      Raised by Parents
(v)       Raised by Child
(vi)      Raised by Other -please specify

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**6(b)**   How were the specific educational needs of the student established? Please specify.

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**6(c)**   What assistance or support is provided to the student? Please tick the box yes/no/don't know for each service listed.

| Service provided | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| i.     Learning and Support Teacher (LAST) assessment | | | |
| ii.    Extra School Learning and Support Officer (SLSO) support | | | |
| iii.   Development of a personalised learning and support plan | | | |
| iv.   Received additional resources | | | |
| v.    Session with therapist | | | |
| vi.   Other – please specify | | | |

**6(d)**   Who **currently** provides this support to the student? Please circle your response. You can choose more than one answer.

(i)        Learning and Support Teacher (LAST)
(ii)       School Learning and Support Officer (SLSO)
(iii)      Classroom Teacher
(iv)     ESL Teacher
(v)      Parent
(vi)     Volunteer
(vii)    Peer
(viii)   Other – please specify

**6(e)**   What has been the outcome for the student? Please circle your response.
(i)        Hardly any improvement
(ii)       Slight improvement
(iii)      Good improvement
(iv)     Significant improvement
(v)      Don't know

**6(f)**   How satisfied do you feel about the outcome for the student? Please circle your response.

(i)        Dissatisfied
(ii)       Mostly dissatisfied
(iii)      Mostly satisfied
(iv)     Satisfied
(v)      Don't know

**6(g)** Why? ...........................................................................................................................................
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**7.** How important are the following types of assistance or support **you** require as the student's teacher to meet his/her needs? Please tick the box not important/somewhat important/very important or not applicable for each support listed.

| Support needed | Not important | Somewhat important | Very important | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| i. Liaison with other teachers regarding the student's history | | | | |
| ii. Face to face professional development and training | | | | |
| iii. Online professional development and training | | | | |
| iv. Development of a personalised learning and support plan | | | | |
| v. School Learning and Support Officer (SLSO) support | | | | |
| vi. Creating new resources | | | | |
| vii. Communicate with parents | | | | |
| viii. Collegial support | | | | |
| ix. Consultation on potential adjustments | | | | |
| x. Team teaching | | | | |
| xi. Other – please specify | | | | |

**8.** Does your school have a functioning Learning Support Team?

*YES/NO*

**9.** In the last 12 months, how often have you participated in a learning support team meeting? Please circle your response. Please circle one option only.

(i) Never
(ii) One off
(iii) Sometimes
(iv) Regularly

**10.** What kind of training have you received in relation to the 'Every Student, Every School' framework? Please tick the box yes/no/unsure to reflect the kind of training you have received.

| Training provided | Yes | No | Unsure |
|---|---|---|---|
| i. Online resources provided by the Department of Education and Communities | | | |
| ii. Other online resources | | | |
| iii. In-service courses | | | |
| Iii. Information provided by the Principal | | | |
| iv. Information provided by other staff members | | | |
| v. Training provided by my school | | | |

| | Hardly at All | Sometimes | Regularly |
|---|---|---|---|
| vi. Resources and training provided by Schools of Specific Purposes | | | |
| vii. Other – please specify | | | |

**11.** How do **you** currently feel about meeting the requirements of students who require additional learning and support in your class?

- (i)     Not at all confident
- (ii)    I have misgivings
- (iii)   Neutral
- (iv)   Secure in my teaching
- (v)    Very confident

**12.** Which of the following teaching methods do you currently use when teaching students who require additional learning and support? Please tick the box hardly at all/sometimes or regularly for each teaching method listed.

| Teaching Method | Hardly at All | Sometimes | Regularly |
|---|---|---|---|
| i.     Team teaching <u>in</u> the classroom | | | |
| ii.    Small group approach <u>in</u> the classroom | | | |
| iii.   Small group approach <u>outside</u> the classroom | | | |
| iv.   One on One support <u>in</u> the classroom | | | |
| v.    One on one support <u>outside</u> the classroom | | | |
| vi.   Other – please specify | | | |

**12(a)** How successful would you describe your teaching method? Please circle your response.

- (i)     Not at all successful
- (ii)    Low success
- (iii)   Neutral
- (iv)   Moderately successful
- (v)    Very successful

**13.** How do you rate the ability of the school to provide assistance or support to **the teachers** of students who require additional learning and support? Please circle your response.

- (i)     Poor
- (ii)    Fair
- (iii)   Good
- (iv)   Very good
- (v)    Don't know

**14.** As a teacher, how involved do **you** feel in decision making regarding students who require additional learning assistance and support in your class? Please circle your response.

- (i)     Not at all involved
- (ii)    Slightly involved
- (iii)   Moderately involved
- (iv)   Very involved
- (v)    Don't know
- (vi)   Other – please specify

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**15.** Would you say the additional learning assistance and support services **currently** provided to **students** in your school are? Please circle your response.

      (i)      more available now than in the past
      (ii)     about the same
      (iii)    less available than in the past

**16.** Would you say the additional learning assistance and support services **currently** provided to **teachers** in your school are? Please circle your response.
      (i)      more available now than in the past
      (ii)     about the same
      (iii)    less available than in the past

**17.** What challenges, if any, exist to the successful implementation of the 'Every Student. Every School' framework in your school? Please comment:

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**18.** In your opinion, who decides how funds are allocated and spent to deliver additional learning assistance and support to students in your school?

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**DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION AWARENESS**

**19.** Have you been provided with training of the objectives of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>?

    ***YES / NO. [**If **No,** go to question **19(b)]***

If ***YES,***

**19(a)** What is the depth of your understanding of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>? Please circle your response.

      (i)      Poor
      (ii)     Limited
      (i)      Good
      (ii)     Very good
      (iii)    Don't Know

If ***NO,***

**19(b)** How important do you consider an understanding of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>? Please circle your response.

      (i)      Not at all important
      (ii)     Low importance
      (iii)    Neither important nor unimportant
      (iv)    Moderately important
      (v)     Very important

**20.** How consistent are the existing 'Every Student, Every School' arrangements in your school with the objectives of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> and the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>? Please circle your response.

      (i)      Inconsistent
      (ii)     Low in consistency
      (iii)    Moderately consistent
      (iv)    Very consistent
      (v)     Don't know

**20(a)** Comment?

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**21.** How do you rate your school's capacity to meet the legislative requirements of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u> with the resources available? Please circle your response.

  (i)     Poor
  (ii)    Fair
  (iii)   Good
  (iv)    Very good
  (v)     Don't know

**22.** Taking into consideration your obligations under the <u>Disability Discrimination Act and associated Standards</u>, how has the 'Every Student, Every School' framework enhanced **your** capacity to meet the needs of students requiring additional learning assistance and support? Please circle your response.

  (i)     Not at all enhanced
  (ii)    Slightly enhanced
  (iii)   Moderately enhanced
  (iv)    Highly enhanced
  (v)     Don't know

**22(a)** If enhanced, please describe how your capacity has been enhanced?

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**22(b)** If not enhanced, please describe why you feel your capacity has not been enhanced?

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**22(c)** What do you wish to see provided to enhance your capacity?

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**THE FUTURE**

**23.** What improvements, if any, do you think could be made to better support **students** with additional learning and support needs in your school?

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**24.** What improvements, if any, do you think could be made to better support **teachers** who teach students with additional learning and support needs in your school ?

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**DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS**

**Please indicate your response by ticking the appropriate box:**

**25.** What is your gender?     Male……… ☐     Female…………☐

**26.** Do you teach in a:

Primary School……… ☐ Secondary School …………☐ Combined Primary/Secondary School……☐

**27.** Is your school situated in a: City area……☐ Regional area ……. ☐  Rural/remote area ……. ☐

**28.** What is the postcode of your school? Please specify ……………………..

**29.** What is your employment status?

Temporary……….……☐  Permanent …………… ☐  Casual ……………….… ☐ .....................

**30.** Do you work?

Part time ………………. ☐  Full time……………….. ☐

**31.** The number of years you have been teaching:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 years ....................☐ | 3-4 years ...................☐ | 5-9 years ...................☐ |
| 10-14 years ................☐ | 15-19 years .................☐ | 20+ years ...................☐ |

**32.** In how many schools have you held teaching positions?

1 position…………….☐  2 positions…………..…☐  3 positions……………. ☐

4-6 positions……..……☐  7-10 positions………….☐  10+ positions………….☐

*Thank you for giving us the benefit of your experience.*

*It will be of great assistance to our project.*

*If you would like to win a registration to the NSW Teachers Federation conference/University of Sydney conference plus paid release time, please send an email to \*\*\*\* with "Conference Prize/Voucher" as the subject heading. Please email your name and contact telephone number to go in the prize draw.*

*Thanks again for your help.*

**Examining the Impact of Education Reform**

**Survey for Learning and Support Teachers and Learning Support Team Coordinators**

The Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney is trying to gain a picture of the learning assistance and support available in our schools to children with a disability, learning difficulties or behaviour support needs. We believe that we can learn a great deal from the experiences and observations of Learning and Support Team Coordinators/Learning and Support Teacher. So, we would very much appreciate your time to enable us to learn from your observations. The information that you give us will remain anonymous and we do not need to record your name or any other identifying details. The only identifying information that we have concerning you is that you are a Learning and Support Teacher (LAST) at your school. Please understand that there is no obligation on you to assist us, but your participation would be highly valued if you feel able to give it.

*Where YES/NO appears, please circle your answer.*

References to the 'Every Student, Every School' framework encompass non-routine learning assistance and support, which refers to that which was provided to students with 'low level' need who, prior to the implementation of 'Every Student, Every School' in April 2012, would have been eligible to access up to $6,400 in Integration Support funding.

**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE**

1.  Prior to the implementation of the Every Student, Every School initiative in **April 2012,** what services supported by NSW DEC did you provide to students with additional learning and support needs in your school?  Please tick the box yes/no/unsure or not applicable for each service listed.

| Service supported by DEC | Yes | No | Unsure | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| i.  Help with literacy | | | | |
| ii.  Help with numeracy | | | | |
| iii.  Help with behaviour | | | | |
| iv.  Help with communication | | | | |
| v.  Hearing support services | | | | |
| vi.  Vision support services | | | | |
| vii.  xi  Additional classroom teacher support | | | | |

| | Service provided | Yes | No | Unsure | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| viii. | Additional support from the Learning and Support Teacher (LAST) | | | | |
| ix. | Additional support from the Learning and Support Officer (SLSO) | | | | |
| x. | Parent support | | | | |
| xi. | Other – please specify | | | | |

**1(b)** Please identify the assistance or support that services that were provided to the student, prior the implementation of the Every Student, Every School initiative, that were provided by agencies outside of the remit of NSW DEC. Please tick the box yes/no/unsure or not applicable for each service listed.

| Service provided (agencies external to DEC) | Yes | No | Unsure | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I. Speech Therapy | | | | |
| II. Occupational Therapy | | | | |
| III. Physiotherapy | | | | |
| IV. Hydrotherapy | | | | |
| V. Other – please specify | | | | |

**2.** How did you feel your school met the requirements of students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**? Please circle your response.

    (i)       Not at all confident
    (ii)      I had misgivings
    (iii)     Secure in what was delivered
    (iv)     Very confident
    (v)      Don't know

**3.** How satisfied did you feel with how services were provided to **teachers** who taught students with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**? Please circle your response.

    (i)       Dissatisfied
    (ii)      Mostly dissatisfied
    (iii)     Mostly satisfied
    (iv)     Satisfied
    (v)      Don't know

**4.** How satisfied did you feel with the way in which services were provided to **students** with additional learning and support needs **prior to April 2012**? Please circle your response.

    (i)       Dissatisfied
    (ii)      Mostly dissatisfied
    (iii)     Mostly satisfied
    (iv)     Satisfied
    (v)      Don't know

**4(a)** Why? ....................................................................................................................

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**CURRENT EXPERIENCE – 'Every Student, Every School'**

**Please answer questions 5 to 19 based on what has happened <u>in 2013 and 2014.</u>**

**5.** How is learning assistance and support being implemented in your school as part of the 'Every Student, Every School' framework?

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**6.** What do **staff** at your school, including the Principal, envisage being achieved through the 'Every Student, Every School' framework?

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**7.** What is the process for a student being identified as requiring additional learning assistance and support in your school? Please specify.

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**7(a)** Is this process explicitly stated and shared among the school community?

*YES/NO [If **NO**, go to question 8]*

If *YES:*

**7(b)** How are staff made aware of the process for identifying students who require additional learning assistance and support? Please tick the box yes/no/don't know to indicate how additional learning needs are identified.

| How additional learning and support needs are identified | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| i.   Information provided by Principal | | | |
| ii.  Staff meetings | | | |
| iii. Information provided by other staff members | | | |
| iv.  Face to face development and training | | | |
| v.   Online development and training | | | |
| vi.  Other – please specify | | | |

**8.** To what extent do you think that the 'Every Student, Every School' framework is benefiting **the students** at your school?  Please circle your response.
(i)    Not at all beneficial
(ii)   Slightly beneficial
(iii)  Moderately beneficial
(iv)   Very beneficial
(v)    Don't know

**8(a)** To what extent do you think that the 'Every Student, Every School' framework is benefiting **the teachers** at your school? Please circle your response.
(i)    Not at all beneficial
(ii)   Slightly beneficial
(iii)  Moderately beneficial
(iv)   Very beneficial
(v)    Don't know

**9.** How satisfied are you with the **current** learning assistance and/or support provided to **students** at your school with additional learning and support needs? Please circle your response.
(i)    Dissatisfied
(ii)   Mostly dissatisfied
(iii)  Mostly satisfied
(iv)   Satisfied
(v)    Don't know

**10.** What kind of training have you received in relation to the 'Every Student, Every School' framework? Please tick the box yes/no or unsure to reflect the kind of training you have received.

| Training provided | Yes | No | Unsure |
|---|---|---|---|
| i. Online resources provided by the Department of Education and Communities | | | |
| ii. Other online resources | | | |
| iii. In-service courses | | | |
| Iii. Information provided by the Principal | | | |
| iv. Information provided by other staff members | | | |
| v. Training provided by my school | | | |
| vi. Resources and training provided by Schools of Specific Purposes | | | |
| vii. Other – please specify | | | |

**11.** How do **you currently** feel about meeting the requirements of students who require additional learning assistance and support in your school? Please circle your response.
(i)     Not at all confident
(ii)    I had misgivings
(iii)   Secure in what was delivered
(iv)    Very confident
(v)     Don't know

**12.** Which of the following teaching methods do you currently use when teaching students who require additional learning and support? Please tick the box which reflects how often you use each teaching method listed.

| Teaching method | Hardly at all | Sometimes | Regularly |
|---|---|---|---|
| i. Team teaching <u>in</u> the classroom | | | |
| ii. Small group approach <u>in</u> the classroom | | | |
| iii. Small group approach <u>outside</u> the classroom | | | |
| iv. One on One support <u>in</u> the classroom | | | |
| v. One on one support <u>outside</u> the classroom | | | |
| vi. Other – please specify | | | |

**12(a)** How successful would you describe your team teaching approach? Please circle your response.

(i)     Not at all successful
(ii)    Low success
(iii)   Moderately successful
(iv)    Very successful
(v)     Don't know

**13.** How do you rate the ability of the school to provide assistance or support to **the teachers** of students who require additional learning and support services? Please circle your response.

(i)   Poor
(ii)   Limited
(iii)   Good
(iv)   Very good
(v)   Don't Know

**14.** How satisfied are you with the **current** learning assistance and/or support provided to **teachers** of students at your school who require additional learning and support services? Please circle your response.

(i)   Dissatisfied
(ii)   Mostly dissatisfied
(iii)   Mostly satisfied
(iv)   Satisfied
(v)   Don't know

**15.** As a LSTC/LaST teacher, how involved do you feel in decision making regarding students who require additional learning assistance and support in your school? Please circle your response.
(i)   Not at all involved
(ii)   Slightly involved
(iii)   Moderately involved
(iv)   Very involved
(v)   Don't know
(vi)   Other – please specify

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**16.** Would you say the additional learning assistance and support services **currently** provided to your child are? Please circle your response.

(i)   more available now than in the past
(ii)   about the same
(iii)   less available than in the past

**17.** Would you say the additional learning assistance and support services **currently** provided to **teachers** in your school are? Please circle your response.
(i)   more available now than in the past
(ii)   about the same
(iii)   less available than in the past

**18.** What challenges, if any, exist to the successful implementation of the 'Every Student. Every School' framework in your school? Please comment:

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**19.** In your opinion, who decides how funds are allocated and spent to deliver additional learning assistance and support in your school?

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**DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION AWARENESS**

**20.** Have you been provided with training about the objectives of the Disability Discrimination Act including the Disability Standards for Education?

*YES/NO [If **No**, go to question **20(b)**]*

If **YES,**

**20(a)** If yes, what is the depth of your understanding of the Disability Discrimination Act including the Disability Standards for Education? Please circle your response.

(i)   Poor

(ii)     Limited
(iii)    Good
(iv)    Very good
(v)    Don't Know

If **NO**,

**20(b)** How important do you consider training of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> including the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>?  Please circle your response.

    (i)    Not at all important
    (ii)    Low importance
    (iii)    Moderately important
    (iv)    Very important
    (v)    Don't know

**21.** How consistent are the existing 'Every Student, Every School' arrangements in your school with the objectives of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> and the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u>? Please circle your response.

    (i)    Inconsistent
    (ii)    Low in consistency
    (iii)    Moderately consistent
    (iv)    Very consistent
    (v)    Don't know

**21(a)** Comment?

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**22.** How do you rate **your school's** capacity to meet the legislative requirements of the <u>Disability Discrimination Act</u> and the <u>Disability Standards for Education</u> with the resources available? Please circle your response.

    (i)    Poor
    (ii)    Limited
    (iii)    Good
    (iv)    Very good
    (v)    Don't Know

**23.** Taking into consideration your obligations under the <u>Disability Discrimination Act,</u> how has the 'Every Student, Every School' framework enhanced **your capacity** to meet the needs of students requiring additional learning assistance and support? Please circle your response.

    (i)    Not at all enhanced
    (ii)    Slightly enhanced
    (iii)    Moderately enhanced
    (iv)    Highly enhanced
    (v)    Don't know

**23(a)** If enhanced, please describe how your capacity has been enhanced?

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**23(b)** If not enhanced, please describe why you feel your capacity has not been enhanced?

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**23(c)** What do you wish to see provided to enhance your capacity?

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**THE FUTURE**

**24.** What improvements, if any, do you think could be made to better support **students** with additional learning and support needs in your school?

**25.** What improvements, if any, do you think could be made to better support **teachers** who teach students with additional learning and support needs in your school?

**DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS**

**Please indicate your response by ticking the appropriate box:**

**26.** What is your gender?   Male……… ☐  Female………..☐

**27.** Do you teach in a:

Primary School……… ☐ Secondary School …………☐ Combined Primary/Secondary School……☐

**28.** Is your school situated in a: City area……☐  Regional area ……. ☐        Rural/remote area ……. ☐

**29.** What is the postcode of your school? …………..

**30.** What is your employment status?

Temporary…………….…☐         Permanent ……………. ☐        Casual ………………… ☐ ......................

**31.** Do you work?

Part time ………………. ☐         Full time……………….. ☐

**32.** The number of years you have been teaching:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1-2 years ....................☐ | 3-4 years ....................☐ | 5-9 years  ....................☐ |
| 10-14 years ................☐ | 15-19 years.................☐ | 20+ years ....................☐ |

**33.** In how many schools have you held teaching positions?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 position……………….☐ | 2 positions…… ……….☐ | 3 positions……………. ☐ |
| 4-6 positions.. …………☐ | 7-10 positions…………☐ | 10+ positions ..………..☐ |

**34.** What qualifications do you have in special education? Please specify.

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**35.** The number of years you have been teaching in special education:

1-2 years ....................☐          3-4 years ...................☐          5-9 years ...................☐

10-14 years ................☐          15-19 years ................☐          20+ years ...................☐


*Thank you for giving us the benefit of your experience.*

*It will be of great assistance to our project.*


*If you would like to win a registration to the NSW Teachers Federation conference/University of Sydney conference plus paid release time, please send an email to \*\*\*  with "Conference Prize/Voucher" as the subject heading. Please email your name and contact telephone number to go in the prize draw.*


*Thanks again for your help.*

# APPENDIX (C)

**Research Integrity**
Human Research Ethics Committee

Monday, 7 July 2014

Assoc Prof David Evans
Education Faculty Admin; Faculty of Education & Social Work
Email: david.evans@sydney.edu.au

Dear David

I am pleased to inform you that the Humanities Low Risk Subcommittee has approved your project entitled "**Examining Impact of Education Reform**".

Details of the approval are as follows:

**Project No.:**              **2014/517**

**Approval Date:**           **7 July 2014**

**First Annual Report Due:**  7 July 2015

**Authorised Personnel:**     **Evans David; Andriana Elga; Rawsthorne Margot; Young Alexandra;**

**Documents Approved:**

| Date Uploaded | Type | Document Name |
|---|---|---|
| 3/07/2014 | Advertisements/Flyer | Recruitmentemail2 Principals v 2-0 |
| 27/05/2014 | Interview Questions | EIER_Qualitative_Interview questions_Class Teachers_mainstre |
| 27/05/2014 | Interview Questions | EIER_Qualitative_Interview questions_LAST_mainstream schools |
| 27/05/2014 | Interview Questions | EIER_Qualitative_Interview questions_Parent_mainstream |
| 27/05/2014 | Interview Questions | EIER_Qualitative_interview questions_Principal_mainstream |
| 27/05/2014 | Interview Questions | EIER_Qualitative_Interview questions_SSP Class teacher |
| 27/05/2014 | Interview Questions | EIER_Qualitative_Interview Questions_SSP Parent |
| 27/05/2014 | Interview Questions | EIER_Qualitative_Interview questions_SSp Principal |
| 27/05/2014 | Other Type | EIER Quantitative study_survey sample_central schools |
| 27/05/2014 | Other Type | EIER_Quantitative sample_Secondary schools |
| 27/05/2014 | Other Type | EIER_Quantitative sample_SSP schools |
| 27/05/2014 | Other Type | EIER_Quantitative_survey sample_Primary schools |

| Date Uploaded | Type | Document Name |
|---|---|---|
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Consent Form | EIER_Overall consent form_SSP Principals |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Consent Form | EIER_Qualitative _Consent_Class teacher_mainstream school |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Consent Form | EIER_Qualitative_Consent SSP Class Teacher |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Consent Form | EIER_Qualitative_Consent SSP Principal |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Consent Form | EIER_Qualitative_Consent_LAST_main stream school |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Consent Form | EIER_Qualitative_Consent_Parent_mai nstream school |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Consent Form | EIEr_Qualitative_Consent_Principal _mainstream schools |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Consent Form | EIER_Qualitative_Consent_SSP Parent |
| 3/07/2014 | Participant Consent Form | PCF-Prinicpals Overall v 2-0 |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_PIS_SSP Principals |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Qualitative_PIS SSP Class Teacher |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Qualitative_PIS_Class Teacher_mainstream schools |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Qualitative_PIS_LAST_mainstrea m school |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_qualitative_PIS_Parent_mainstre am schools |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Qualitative_PIS_Principal _mainstream schools |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Qualitative_PIS_SSP Parent |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Qualitative_PIS_SSP Parent |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Qualitative_PIS_SSP Principal |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Quantitative PIS_ClassTeacher mainstream school |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Quantitative PIS_LAST_mainstream school |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Quantitative PIS_Parent mainstream school |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Quantitative PIS_Principal mainstream school |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Quantitative PIS_SSP Class Teacher |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Quantitative PIS_SSP Parent |
| 27/05/2014 | Participant Info Statement | EIER_Quantitative PIS_SSP Principal |
| 3/07/2014 | Participant Info Statement | PIS-Principals Overall v 2-0 |
| 27/05/2014 | Questionnaires/Surveys | EIER_Qualitative_recruitment email_SSP |
| 27/05/2014 | Questionnaires/Surveys | EIER_Quantitative survey_LAST_mainstream school |
| 27/05/2014 | Questionnaires/Surveys | EIER_Quantitative survey_Parent_mainstream school |
| 27/05/2014 | Questionnaires/Surveys | EIER_Quantitative survey_SSP Class Teacher |
| 27/05/2014 | Questionnaires/Surveys | EIER_Quantitative survey_SSP Parent |
| 27/05/2014 | Questionnaires/Surveys | EIER_Quantitative survey_SSP Principal |
| 3/07/2014 | Questionnaires/Surveys | EIERQuantSurveyClassTch v2-0 |
| 3/07/2014 | Questionnaires/Surveys | EIERQuantSurveyPrin v2-0 |
| 3/07/2014 | Recruitment Letter/Email | RecruitmentEmail1 Principals v 2-0 |

| Date Uploaded | Type | Document Name |
|---|---|---|
| 3/07/2014 | Recruitment Letter/Email | RecruitmentEmail1 SSPprincipals v 2-0 |
| 3/07/2014 | Recruitment Letter/Email | Recruitmentemail2 SSPprincipals v 2-0 |
| 3/07/2014 | Recruitment Letter/Email | Recruitmentemail3 Principals v 2-0 |
| 3/07/2014 | Recruitment Letter/Email | Recruitmentemail3 SSPprincipals v 2-0 |

HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the approval date stated in this letter and is granted pending the following conditions being met:

**Condition/s of Approval**

- Continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans.

- Provision of an annual report on this research to the Human Research Ethics Committee from the approval date and at the completion of the study. Failure to submit reports will result in withdrawal of ethics approval for the project.

- All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC within 72 hours.

- All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.

- Any changes to the project including changes to research personnel must be approved by the HREC before the research project can proceed.

- Note that for student research projects, a copy of this letter must be included in the candidate's thesis.

**Chief Investigator / Supervisor's responsibilities:**

1. You must retain copies of all signed Consent Forms (if applicable) and provide these to the HREC on request.

2. It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.

Please do not hesitate to contact Research Integrity (Human Ethics) should you require further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

**Associate Professor Judith Cashmore**
**Chair**
**Humanities Low Risk Subcommittee**

> **This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), NHMRC and Universities Australia Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007) and the CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice.**

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**NSW** GOVERNMENT | **Education & Communities**

A/Professor David Evans
Faculty of Education and Social Work
A35 Manning Road
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY NSW 2006

CORP14/10065
DOC14/337497
**SERAP 2014057**

Dear A/Professor Evans

I refer to your application to conduct a research project in NSW government schools entitled *Examining the Impact of Education Reform*. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved. You may contact principals of the nominated schools to seek their participation. **You should include a copy of this letter with the documents you send to schools.**

This approval will remain valid until 18 July 2015.

The following researchers or research assistants have fulfilled the Working with Children screening requirements to interact with or observe children for the purposes of this research for the period indicated:

| Name | Approval expires |
|---|---|
| Alexandra Young | 05/11/2018 |
| David Greig Evans | 16/09/2018 |
| Margote Rawsthorne | 18/07/2019 |
| Elga Andriana | 08/04/2019. |

I draw your attention to the following requirements for all researchers in NSW government schools:

- School principals have the right to withdraw the school from the study at any time. The approval of the principal for the specific method of gathering information must also be sought.
- The privacy of the school and the students is to be protected.
- The participation of teachers and students must be voluntary and must be at the school's convenience.
- Any proposal to publish the outcomes of the study should be discussed with the research approvals officer before publication proceeds.

When your study is completed please email your report to: serap@det.nsw.edu.au.

You may also be asked to present on the findings of your research.

I wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Robert Stevens
**R/Leader, Quality Assurance Systems**
18 July 2014