

# NSW Department of Education and Communities' Implementation Plan for the More Support for Students with Disabilities Initiative

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT FOR  
MORE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

## PART 1 - PRELIMINARIES

1. This Implementation Plan is created subject to the provisions of the National Partnership Agreement for More Support for Students with Disabilities and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement. The objective of the National Partnership Agreement for More Support for Students with Disabilities is 'Australian schools and teachers are better able to support students with disabilities, contributing to improved student learning experiences, educational outcomes and transitions to further education or work.'
2. The NSW Department of Education and Communities' (the Department) project under this National Partnership Agreement is comprised of a comprehensive and integrated suite of strategic activities that are designed to enhance and strengthen support for more than 90,000 students with disabilities and additional learning and support needs in more than 2,200 public schools, through outcomes that are sustainable beyond the term of the Agreement.

The Department's project activities are designed to enable the establishment of a 'learning and support framework' for students with disabilities across the NSW public school system. This framework was developed by the Department in consultation with education, parent and community stakeholders. It is based on essential elements that are required for improving learning and support for every student with disability in every NSW public school.

## PART 2 - TERMS OF THIS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

3. This Implementation Plan will commence as soon as it is agreed between the Commonwealth of Australia, Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, and the State of New South Wales, represented by the Minister for Education.
4. The purpose of this Implementation Plan is to provide information on bilateral commitments under the National Partnership agreement and to provide the public with information about how the underlying project will be delivered at a jurisdictional level.
5. This Implementation Plan will cease on completion of the project as specified in this Implementation Plan, including the Commonwealth's acceptance of the final progress report (Progress Report 3) and processing of related final payments.
6. This Implementation Plan may be varied by written agreement between the Ministers.
7. The Parties to this Implementation Plan do not intend any of the provisions to be legally enforceable. However, that does not lessen the Parties' commitment to this Implementation Plan.

## PART 3 - STRATEGY FOR NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES' IMPLEMENTATION

### **Environmental Scan, Needs Analysis and Consultation**

The NSW public school system is large and complex with more than 740,000 students taught daily in more than 2,200 primary, secondary, central and special schools and more than 50,000 classrooms across the state.

Schools range widely in size from as few as 5 enrolments to more than 1700.

103 schools across the state are classified as rural and remote. Of these schools, 50 have less than 100 students and 31 schools have less than 30 students.

Seventy six percent of all students with confirmed disability in New South Wales are enrolled in public schools. These students are enrolled in:

- regular classes in regular schools with support,
- specialist support classes in regular schools and
- special schools.

Where students with a disability are enrolled is informed by the choices that their parents make.

Around 12% of the student population (90,000 students) have a disability or additional needs relating to difficulties in learning. Of these students:

- 4.5% (35,000 students) have a confirmed disability against the Department's disability criteria (intellectual, physical, hearing, vision, mental health and autism).
- 7.5% (55,000 students) have additional needs relating to learning difficulties and/or behaviour difficulties including dyslexia, reading and/or communication delay and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

77% of students with a disability or additional needs relating to difficulties in learning are enrolled in our mainstream or regular schools.

A wide range of services and programs have been developed and implemented over time to provide additional support for these students. These include:

- specialist services and programs that provide targeted individualised support for students based on their eligibility against the Department's disability criteria, such as special classes, specialist teacher services and additional targeted funding for students in regular classes; and
- programs that provide resources and specialist services to schools to support students experiencing difficulties in learning, regardless of the cause, which do not require a formal disability diagnosis or confirmation.

The need to find new ways of providing high quality education for students with disabilities in NSW government schools is strongly indicated by a range of interrelated factors. This includes:

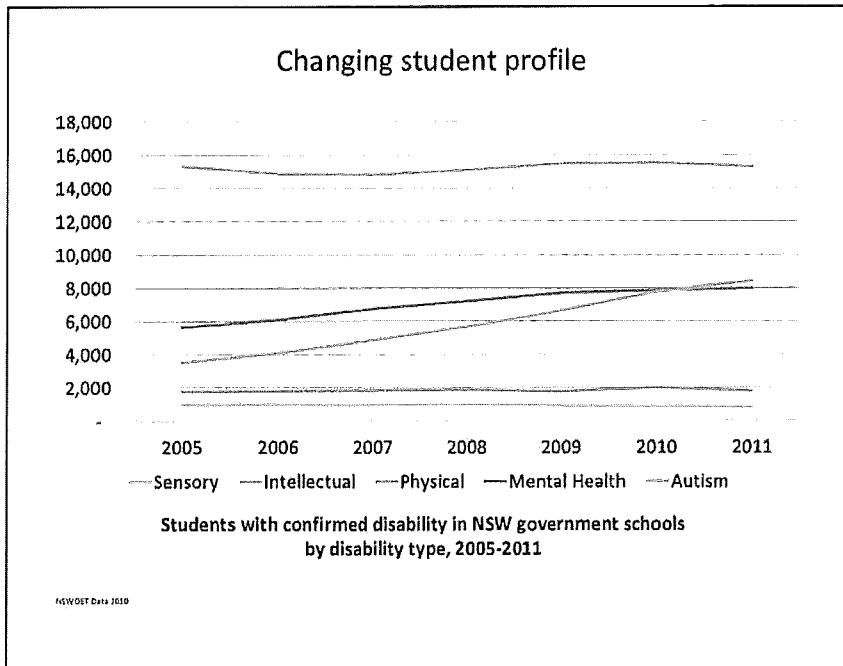
- the changing profiles of students with disabilities
- the changing demand in education placements
- growth in expenditure
- nature of service delivery
- expectation and obligations around disability and
- National reform agendas in education and support for people with disability.

The NSW Legislative Council's *Inquiry into the provision of education for students with a disability and special needs* in 2010 most recently highlighted these factors.

### **Changing student profile**

The prevalence of primary disability 'type' has changed considerably in NSW public schools over recent years. As shown in the graph below, intellectual disability remains the most frequently reported disability type and its incidence has remained constant, as has physical disability. The incidence of sensory disability (hearing and vision) has fallen slightly.

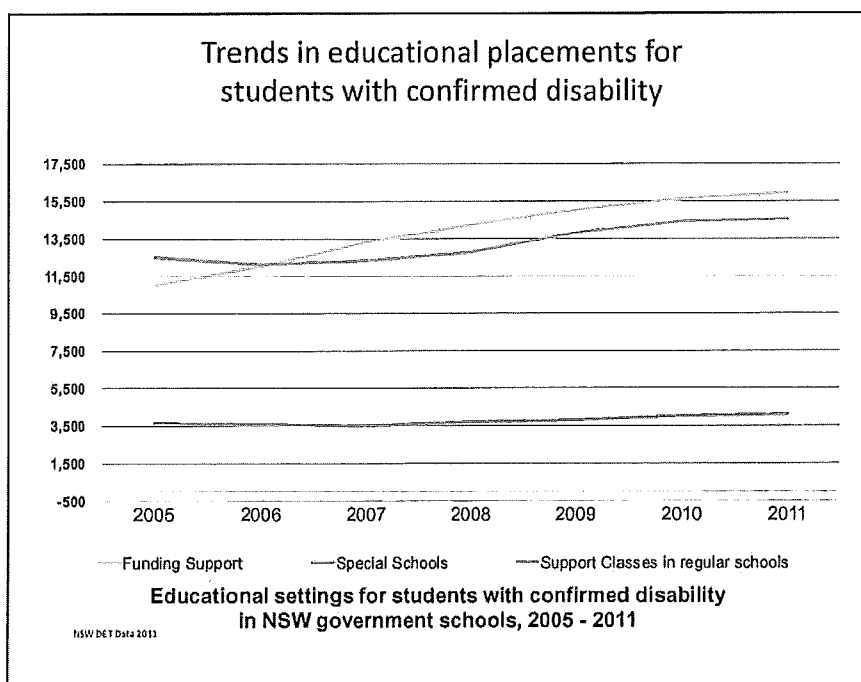
In contrast, there has been a sharp increase in the number of students who meet the Department's disability criteria for autism or mental health disorder. The growth in numbers of students with autism and mental health disorders is consistent with international experience. Some students have more than one disabling condition.



### Changing demand in education placements

As shown in the graph below, the demand for all education placement types for students with disabilities has increased over time, reflecting the increasing student numbers overall. However, demand for special school placements (also known as schools for specific purposes or SSPs) has remained generally constant or increased only slightly over recent years, while demand for placements in regular school settings has increased at a greater rate. In particular, the demand for regular class placements for students with disabilities has increased most significantly over time.

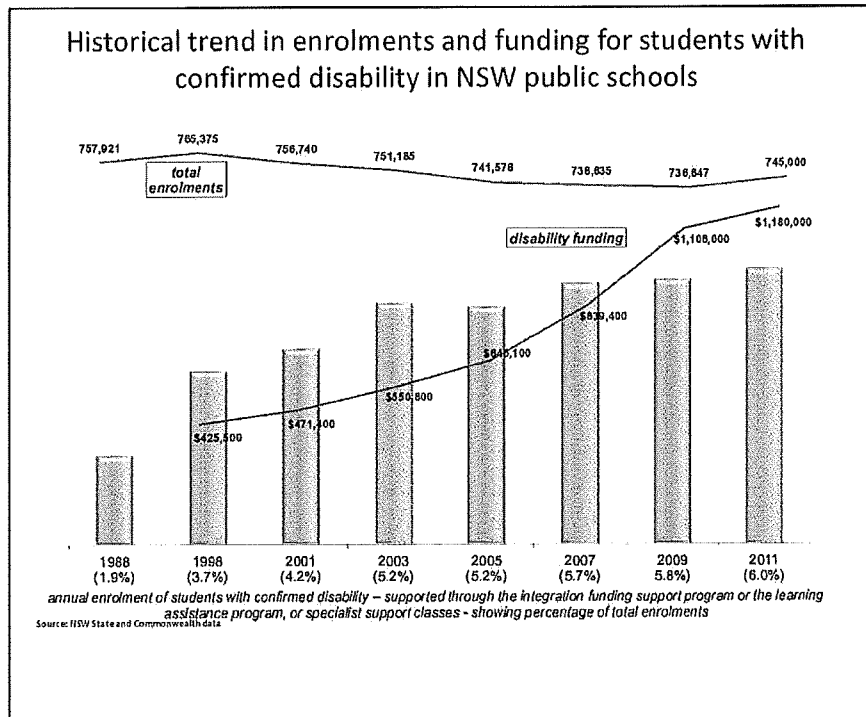
There is an increasing demand for support class placements in regular schools for students in secondary years as a result of parents of many students with disabilities in mainstream primary school classes seeking a more supported setting for high school.



## Growth in expenditure

In line with international trends, NSW total expenditure on students with disabilities has increased significantly over the years. A key reason for this increase has been the rising numbers and identification of students with a disability attending NSW government schools.

In the last ten years there has been a 144 per cent increase in expenditure in special education. In 2010/11, the Department allocated more than \$1.1 billion to support students with a disability or special needs.



## The nature of service delivery

In 2011, students with disabilities are enrolled in every classroom and every school. The current system of providing additional support has been built over many years. This system is based predominantly on a categorical model that recognizes disability 'type' or label rather than functional educational need. This becomes particularly challenging for regular teachers working in regular classes. Many of the Department's specialist services and programs that provide targeted individualised support for students with disabilities are aligned with this categorical model, where access is contingent on meeting the Department's disability criteria (intellectual, physical, hearing, vision, mental health and autism).

Many students within the same disability category have different needs for type and level of support. For example, students who have a diagnosis of autism may have different needs in relation to communication, behaviour and social integration due to the nature of this complex developmental disorder. These needs may change over time and be different for each student.

In the early years of education, a student with additional needs can often present as having language or communication delay where there is no diagnosed disability or disorder. The

same student may be identified during their middle years as having an autism spectrum disorder as social and behaviour difficulties emerge. As with many young people with an autism spectrum disorder, that same student may be identified with a mental health disorder such as anxiety or depression in their later schooling years.

Schools are increasingly challenged by students who may present with additional or complex needs but who do not meet existing disability criteria for additional support. This includes students who do not have a formal diagnosis by a relevant health clinician, either because they don't meet diagnostic criteria, they have limited access to clinical assessment services or their parents/carers do not seek a disability label.

Alternatively, for some students who have more than one disability 'type' or who have multiple needs associated with their disability, schools are challenged by different specialist services providing different elements of support that are not well integrated around the functional educational needs of students.

Lack of access to services in remote and rural areas of NSW is also reported by parents and schools to be a major challenge in accessing additional support for students. Isolation and inaccessibility of services can compound other factors known to impact on learning.

Specialist settings, such as schools for specific purposes, have developed deep knowledge and understanding of the needs of learners with disabilities. There needs to be an opportunity for this knowledge and understanding to be brought to the wider educational community.

### **Obligations and expectations around disability**

The introduction of the Standards has contributed to changed expectations about access and participation in education for students with disabilities. The *Disability Standards for Education* introduced in 2005, under the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, require that education providers ensure that students with a disability are able to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability. Education providers are required to make or provide 'reasonable adjustments' for the individual student where required, in consultation with the student or their parents/carers.

New South Wales is strongly committed to ongoing improvements to education services and programs for all students, including those with disability. This commitment is reflected the State plan, *NSW 2021*. This ten year plan includes specific goals, targets and priority actions for supporting high expectations for every student, including students with disability and for improving education and learning outcomes. Key targets and actions relate to personalized learning and support planning for students with disability (NSW State Plan, *NSW 2021*).

In addition, the Department's Disability Action Plan 2011-2015, a statutory requirement under the NSW *Disability Services Act 1993*, sets out a wide range of strategies and actions for improving the accessibility of the Department's services for people with disability, including access and participation in school education (NSW DEC Disability Action Plan 2011-2015).

### **National reform agendas**

There are significant national reform agendas operating in both education and in disability care and support that intersect and these will present significant challenges into the future.

In education, there is a growing international focus on accountability for educational outcomes and an increased emphasis on all students acquiring a common set of basic skills, particularly in literacy, numeracy and social competence, and corresponding measurement of achievement.

The development of an Australian curriculum and expectations that all students to participate in national and/or state-wide testing at regular stages of their schooling to assess their performance sharpens attention on the educational performance of every child, including those with disabilities.

The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 provides a focus on improving supports for people with disabilities, including children and their families, across a range of policy areas, including education. New South Wales is currently developing a state implementation plan for the National Disability Strategy.

In disability care and support, there is a growing emphasis on person-centred approaches to the provision of services that enable participation in the community and support families. At state and national levels there is also an increasing emphasis on individualised funding arrangements and choice in service options. The Australian Government's reform activities in the area of disability care and support, including the National Disability Strategy, reflect these directions.

### **Learning and support for students with disabilities**

Against this background, it is essential that new ways of doing business to support students with disabilities into the future are developed and implemented in NSW public schools.

With more students with disabilities and adjusted learning needs in every classroom and every school than ever before, classroom teachers, their schools and support staff need to be equipped to understand the difference that students have in their learning needs and have the capacity to support them.

The following elements provide the foundations of effective learning and support for students with disabilities in all NSW public schools:

- **Pedagogy** - having high expectations for every student and making adjustments to support the learning needs of individual students.
- **Curriculum** - working toward high quality outcomes for students with disability benchmarked against students without disability: rigorous, meaningful and dignified learning for every student.
- **Teacher quality** - delivering high quality professional learning for members of the school community to support every student with additional learning needs.
- **Collaboration** - developing and implementing personalised learning and support plans in full collaboration with the student and / or their parents and carers, and where relevant, other agencies.
- **Accountability** - being accountable in the context in obligations under the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and associated *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

The Department will implement integrated project activities against six National Partnership outputs. These project activities are designed to enable the above framework for improved learning and support in every school. The project activities will support flexible local decision making in schools and build the capacity of schools to support students with

disabilities consistent with the objectives and outcomes of the National Partnership Agreement.

Activities are clustered in the following project focus areas:

- **Skilled and knowledgeable classroom teachers** through flexible, multi-modal approaches to professional learning.
- **Enhanced special education knowledge in every school** through supporting the establishment of increased specialist teacher support directly in schools supported by additional expertise in regions.
- **Establishing special schools as centres of expertise** through networked projects that share expert knowledge and resources across schools.
- **Instruments to understand and support additional learning needs** through the development of tools for teachers to profile the functional educational skills, abilities and needs of their students and to develop and implement personalized learning and support plans.
- **Access to specialist in-depth knowledge and support** through enhanced information for students, parents and teachers and implementation of projects that expand specialist supports for students with disabilities and trial new ways of supporting students with more complex needs including through assistive technologies.

### **Consultation**

The NSW Department of Education and Communities has consulted with education, parent and community stakeholders across a range of organisations and representative bodies in the development of the learning and support framework. This includes representatives from primary, secondary and special school principal groups, parent and community groups, university sector, and disability advocacy groups representing children with disabilities and their families.

Consultations have indicated consistent agreement with the foundation elements of effective learning and support for students with disabilities and strong support for an approach to projects that enable a robust framework for learning and support in all schools.

### **Collaboration**

Through discussions with other government and non-government jurisdictions, the Department has identified strategic opportunities and potential benefits to be gained from collaboration through this National Partnership.

This includes identified opportunities for collaboration with interested government and non-government jurisdictions in the following areas of professional learning for teachers:

- Further development and implementation of specialist online training to support teachers and other education personnel in key areas of special education need. This builds on the Department's experience over the last three years in delivering specialist online training modules through a highly successful blended model of workshops and supported online learning.
- Development and implementation of an online training package to support understanding of obligations for education providers under the Commonwealth *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.



The Department has also identified potential for collaboration with the Catholic schools sector in New South Wales in its project for networking the specialist expertise and resources available in special schools with other schools, referred to above.

The design of the Department's implementation plan allows for this collaboration to be facilitated.

### Participating schools

The Department's project activities through the National Partnership encompass more than 2,200 primary, secondary and special schools across the state, and benefit students with disabilities in all school settings.

Details regarding each of the participating schools and the National Partnership outputs occurring in each school will be provided once available. It is anticipated that schools may participate in different project activities over the duration of the National Partnership in 2012 and 2013.

### Project information

The Department's learning and support framework Project includes major strategies for implementing six National Partnership Agreement outputs: Each strategy incorporates a range of activities to support implementation of the output. These outputs and strategies are provided in the table below (further details at Attachment B).

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP OUTPUT	STRATEGY DESCRIPTION
<p>Providing training for practising teachers to build their skills in special education</p>	<p><b>Professional learning</b></p> <p>Develop and implement a range of flexible, multi-modal, targeted accredited professional learning for teachers in more than 2,000 NSW public schools that supports high expectations of students with disabilities, builds teachers' knowledge and skills in making adjustments to support curriculum access and supports effective collaborative partnerships with parents and other professionals. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding access for more teachers to accredited online training courses in key areas of additional learning and support needs.</li> <li>• Developing additional accredited professional learning including collaborative work with other government and non-government providers to develop training in the <i>Disability Standards for Education 2005</i>.</li> <li>• Providing scholarships for teachers to undertake retraining and gain a special education qualification through local universities.</li> <li>• Providing support for schools to undertake further training in priority areas including rural mental health and positive behaviour support.</li> </ul>

<p>Supporting teachers to develop or modify lesson plans to suit the needs of students with disabilities</p>	<p><b>Special education knowledge in regular schools</b></p> <p>Support the establishment of a specialist teacher presence in every regular NSW public school and strengthen the capacity of each school's learning and support team, paired with professional learning. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing support for schools and regions to implement the learning and support framework in every school including the re-organisation of some existing specialist support services to allocate these resources directly to schools.</li> <li>• Providing extensive and ongoing training to support school leaders, teachers and support staff in: understanding the learning and support framework and accountabilities under the <i>Disability Standards for Education 2005</i>; effective local decision making about the use of resources to support students with disability and their classroom teachers; and collaborative use of resources to achieve educational outcomes for students with disability.</li> </ul>
<p>Developing support centres which serve as a centre of expertise in the educational needs of students with disabilities and provide expert support to a group of other schools that may not have this expertise</p>	<p><b>Special schools as centres of expertise</b></p> <p>Develop networks across schools to share knowledge, expertise and specialist resources available or developed in NSW public special schools in the following areas: assistive technology; complex case support; communication and curriculum; transition; and parent/community collaboration. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting special schools to undertake locally designed projects in defined areas of priority need.</li> <li>• Incorporating a networking strategy integral to the implementation of local projects to build and share knowledge across schools within their region or local area.</li> <li>• Providing peer support and an academic contributor for the development of high quality projects and outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p>Supporting staff to assess the current learning level of students with disabilities, adapt the teaching curriculum to suit their current level of ability and report on student progress against adapted curriculum</p>	<p><b>Instruments to understand and support individual student learning needs</b></p> <p>Develop and implement materials to support teachers and schools in assessing the impact of disability on the learning of students and to inform planning to meet the individual learning and support needs of students. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerating the development of a functional assessment tool for teachers to profile the learning and support needs of individual students in collaboration with their parents.</li> <li>• Developing a standards framework and best practice guide to support the development of personalised learning and support for students with disability</li> </ul>

<p>Schools coordinating with health/allied health or other professionals to strengthen schools' support for students with disabilities</p>	<p><b>Expert support</b></p> <p>Expand specialist support services and resources to support students with disabilities through developing and trialling options for supporting students with complex disabilities and/or highly specialised support needs, including through assistive technologies, across the full range of educational settings. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing an academic partnership with a local university to undertake research on support for students with complex reading difficulties and their teachers</li> <li>• Trialling new approaches around the use of specialist assistive technologies for students in collaboration with other government and non-government agencies, including students with complex communication support needs, students with conductive hearing loss in high needs areas and live captioning in classrooms for students who are deaf.</li> <li>• Trialling new models for supporting students with disability who have high and complex health care needs.</li> </ul>
<p>Supporting school principals and/or leadership teams to strengthen teachers' ability to assist students with disabilities</p>	<p><b>Information to support teaching and learning</b></p> <p>Expand information to support student learning and support needs through further development of specialist information resources accessible to all school communities. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing an improved website to support teachers, principals, and school communities around how additional learning and support needs are met in NSW public schools and specialist services and resources available to schools.</li> <li>• Enhancing specialist information for schools about disability and related health conditions and implications for learning.</li> </ul>

These interrelated strategies will be developed and implemented across the duration of the National Partnership Agreement. Timelines for the implementation of each strategy are set out below in Tables 2.1 – 2.6.

**Table 2.1: Timeline for implementing Professional learning**

Task	Completion date
Establish baseline data, fully scope project activities and tasks, develop project management, monitoring and data collection plans	29 February 2012
Detailed operational planning for development and delivery, models for delivery and state-wide progressive implementation strategy, development of support materials	31 March 2012
Progressively implement professional learning activities from term 1, 2012	Term 4, 2013

**Table 2.2: Timeline for implementing Special education knowledge in regular schools**

Task	Completion date
Establish baseline data, fully scope project activities tasks, develop detailed project management, monitoring and data collection plans	31 January 2012
Detailed operational planning and development of support materials, models for delivery and implementation strategy	31 April 2012
Commence phased implementation of strategy from term 2, 2012	Term 4, 2013

**Table 2.3: Timeline for implementing Special schools as centres of expertise**

Task	Completion date
Establish baseline data, develop project guidelines for schools, develop detailed project management, monitoring and data collection plans	20 February 2012
Detailed operational planning and development of project plans and implementation strategies	5 April 2012
Schools commence implementing projects from late term 1, 2012	Term 4, 2013

**Table 2.4: Timeline for implementing Instruments to understand and support individual student learning needs**

Task	Completion date
Fully scope project activities and tasks, establish baseline data and develop detailed project management, monitoring and data collection plans	29 February 2012
Develop and trial tools, materials and training packages	31 July 2012
Commence implementing tools, materials and training in Term 4, 2012	Term 4, 2013

**Table 2.5: Timeline for implementing Expert support**

Task	Completion date
Fully scope project activities and tasks, establish baseline data and develop detailed project management, monitoring and data collection plans	30 March 2012
Develop models for trials and progressive implementation of specialist resources	30 April 2012
Commence implementation of trials and specialist resources from mid-late Term 1, 2012	Term 4, 2013

**Table 2.6: Timeline for implementing Information to support teaching and learning**

Task	Completion date
Fully scope project activities and tasks, establish baseline data and develop detailed project management, monitoring and data collection plans	29 February 2012
Develop and test website and materials	31 October 2012
Finalise website for launch	31 December 2012
Monitor usage and adjust	Term 4, 2013

Table 3 below includes further detail about the Department's strategies for delivering National Partnership outputs and strategies associated with enabling the learning and support framework in NSW public schools for achieving outcomes.

Table 3: Project logic

Strategies for delivering outputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Objective	Responsible parties
<p><b>Professional learning</b> Develop and implement professional learning for teachers in more than 2,000 schools that supports high expectations of students with disabilities, builds teachers skills in making adjustments for curriculum access and supports effective collaborative partnerships</p>	<p>Providing training for practising teachers to build their skills in special education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools are better able to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities, in collaboration with parents, carers and students</li> <li>Schools become more inclusive environments, in accordance with the <i>Disability Standards in Education 2005</i>, recognising the diversity students with disabilities bring to the school</li> </ul>	<p>Schools and teachers are better able to support students with disabilities, contributing to improved student learning experiences, educational outcomes and transitions to further education or work</p>	<p>Outcomes are delivered by teachers and regional support services</p>
<p><b>Special education knowledge in regular schools</b> Support the establishment of a specialist teacher presence in every regular NSW public school and strengthened capacity of each school's learning support team, paired with professional learning, to support more students with disabilities in regular schools and their classroom teachers</p>	<p>Supporting teachers to develop or modify lesson plans to suit the needs of students with disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools become more inclusive environments, in accordance with the <i>Disability Standards in Education 2005</i>, recognising the diversity students with disabilities bring to the school</li> <li>Schools are better able to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities, in collaboration with parents, carers and students</li> </ul>	<p>Schools and teachers are better able to support students with disabilities, contributing to improved student learning experiences, educational outcomes and transitions to further education or work</p>	<p>Outcomes are delivered by teachers, principals, school education directors and regional support services</p>
<p><b>Special schools as centres of expertise</b> Develop networks across schools to share knowledge, expertise and specialist resources available or developed in special schools</p>	<p>Developing support centres which serve as a centre of expertise in the educational needs of students with disabilities and provide expert support to a group of other schools that may not have this expertise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers of students with disabilities have better access to expert support</li> <li>Schools are better able to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities, in collaboration with parents, carers and students</li> <li>Educational policy makers are informed of effective practice to support long term policy development</li> </ul>	<p>Schools and teachers are better able to support students with disabilities, contributing to improved student learning experiences, educational outcomes and transitions to further education or work</p>	<p>Outcomes are delivered by teachers and principals</p>

<p><b>Instruments to understand and support individual student learning needs</b> Develop a functional assessment tool for teachers to profile the learning support needs of students, standards and materials and training to support personalised learning and support planning</p>	<p>Supporting staff to assess the current learning level of students with disabilities, adapt the teaching curriculum to suit their current level of ability and report on student progress against adapted outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools are better able to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities, in collaboration with parents, carers and students and teachers are more capable of identifying and addressing the educational needs of students with disabilities</li> </ul>	<p>Schools and teachers are better able to support students with disabilities, contributing to improved student learning experiences, educational outcomes and transitions to further education or work</p>	<p>Outcomes are delivered by teachers, principals and regional support services</p>
<p><b>Expert support</b> Expand specialist support services and resources to support students with disabilities through developing and trialling support options across the full range of school settings</p>	<p>Schools coordinating with health/allied health or other professionals to strengthen schools' support for students with disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers of students with disabilities have better access to expert support</li> <li>Educational policy makers are informed of effective practice to support long term policy development</li> </ul>	<p>Schools and teachers are better able to support students with disabilities, contributing to improved student learning experiences, educational outcomes and transitions to further education or work</p>	<p>Outcomes are delivered by teachers, principals and regional support services</p>
<p><b>Information to support teaching and learning</b> Expand information to support student learning needs through improved website and further development of specialist information resources accessible to all schools.</p>	<p>Supporting school principals and/or leadership teams to strengthen teachers' ability to assist students with disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principals and school leaders are better able to support teachers and teachers are more capable of identifying and addressing the educational needs of students with disabilities</li> <li>Parents, carers, school leaders, school administrators, teachers and the wider community are better informed about effective practice and strategies that benefit the educational achievement of students with disabilities</li> </ul>	<p>Schools and teachers are better able to support students with disabilities, contributing to improved student learning experiences, educational outcomes and transitions to further education or work</p>	<p>Outcomes are delivered by school leadership teams and teachers</p>

## Links with existing reforms or projects

**Table 4:** Links with existing strategies

Strategies for delivering outputs	Existing strategies	Details of overlap or complementary nature of strategies
Professional learning	The department provides a comprehensive range of accredited professional learning for teachers across the state and offers retraining in special education for eligible teachers.	The strategy will build on existing professional learning and specialist training for teachers by increasing access for more teachers, increasing the number of professional learning courses and options, developing new materials and courses and targeting. It complements the strategy for supporting students with disabilities in regular classes.
Supporting students with disabilities in regular classes	A range of specialist services support students with disabilities and their teachers. Some of these services are located in schools while other related services are regionally based.	The strategy will build on the experience of a twelve month trial of providing a specialist teacher presence and increased capacity for flexible local decision making about how best to support students with additional learning needs and disabilities in more than 220 schools in one region. It is paired with targeted professional learning for teachers and supported by the development of instruments for teachers to understand and support individual student needs.
Instruments to understand and support individual student learning needs	The department has undertaken extensive developmental work on a tool for assessing the strengths, skills, abilities and needs of students with disabilities to inform their planning to meet the individual learning needs of students.	The strategy will enable the accelerated development of a reliable and valid tool that enables teachers to profile the learning support needs of students with disabilities in addition to the development of materials to support personalised learning and support planning for students with disabilities. It complements the strategy for supporting students with disabilities in regular classes, and is supported by professional learning.
Expert support	The department provides support for students with complex disabilities and support needs directly through its specialist services and through partnerships with a range of government and non-government organisations.	The strategy will build on existing partnerships and support the development and trial of new ways to support students who have complex disabilities and/or highly specialised support needs. It complements the strategy for Special Schools as centres for expertise.



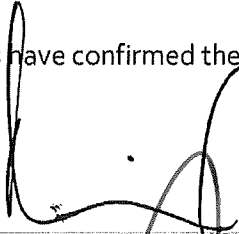
## Performance indicators and benchmarks

8. Performance indicators and benchmarks for this project are listed at Attachment A.

### Sign off

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

Signature

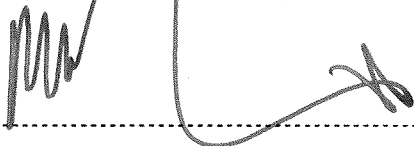


Date

27-02-2012

[By state/territory Minister or agreed by exchange of letters]

Signature



Date

14.3.12

[By Commonwealth Minister or agreed by exchange of letters]

# NSW Department of Education and Communities' Outputs, Payment Weightings, Performance Indicators and Performance Benchmarks

## Outputs, payment weightings, performance indicators and performance benchmarks

- The outputs to be implemented in NSW Department of Education and Communities under the National Partnership Agreement for More Support for Students with Disabilities and related payment weightings are listed in Table 1. The performance indicators, baseline data and performance benchmarks are listed in Table 2. The payment percentages allocated to outputs in Table 1 will be paid to the States on the Commonwealth's acceptance of the related progress report, demonstrating progress in meeting performance benchmarks outlined in Table 2. This is the case for all payments except those against reporting period 1 which are paid in advance in recognition of the requirement for working capital to assist with the implementation of outputs.

Table 1: Outputs and payment weightings<sup>1</sup>

Outputs	Reporting Period 1 (30 November 2011 – 30 June 2012)	Reporting Period 2 (1 July 2012 – 1 March 2013)	Reporting Period 3 (2 March 2013 – 31 December 2013)	Total
Providing training for practising teachers to build their skills in special education.	12%	12%	6%	30%
Supporting teachers to develop or modify lesson plans to suit the needs of students with disabilities.	12%	12%	6%	30%
Developing support centres which serve as a centre of expertise in the educational needs of students with disabilities and provide expert support to a group of other schools that may not have this expertise.	10%	10%	5%	25%
Supporting school staff to assess the current learning level of students with disabilities, adapt the teaching curriculum to suit their current level of ability and report on student progress against adapted curriculum.	2%	2%	1%	5%
Schools coordinating with health/allied health or other professionals to strengthen schools' support for students with disabilities.	3.5%	3.5%	1.5%	8.5%
Supporting school principals and/or leadership teams to strengthen teachers' ability to assist students with disabilities.	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2: Performance indicators, baseline data and performance benchmarks

<sup>1</sup> Percentages have been rounded for presentation purposes. Actual percentages of total allocation received on acceptance of related progress report will differ slightly acknowledging that the total amount received in a financial year cannot exceed the amounts in Table 3 of the National Partnership Agreement for More Support for Students with Disabilities.

# Attachment A

Outputs	Performance Indicators	Baseline date or Period	Performance Indicator as at Baseline	Performance Benchmarks as at 30 June 2012	Performance Benchmarks as at 1 March 2013	Performance Benchmarks as at 31 December 2013
Providing training for practising teachers to build their skills in special education.	Number and/or numerical range of practising teachers that participated in training to build their skills in special education	31 January 2012	0	1000-1,500 above 31 January 2012 baseline	3,000-4,500 above 31 January 2012 baseline	4,000-6,000 above 31 January 2012 baseline
Supporting teachers to develop or modify lesson plans to suit the needs of students with disabilities	Number and/or numerical range of teachers supported to develop or modify lesson plans to suit the needs	31 January 2012	0	250-500 above 31 January 2012 baseline	1000-1,200 above 31 January 2012 baseline	1,200-2,000 above 31 January 2012 baseline
Developing support centres which serve as a centre of expertise in the educational needs of students with disabilities	1. Number and/or numerical range of support centres providing support to the school system 2. Number and/or numerical range of schools supported by support centres	31 January 2012	0	0-20 above 31 January 2012 baseline	20-40 above 31 January 2012 baseline	20-40 above 31 January 2012 baseline
Supporting school staff to assess the current learning level of students with disabilities, adapt the teaching curriculum to suit their current level of ability and report on student progress against adapted curriculum.	Number and/or numerical range of school staff supported in assessing students with disabilities, adapting curriculum to their needs and reporting on student progress	31 January 2012	0	0 above 31 January 2012 baseline (development phase)	500-1,000 above 31 January 2012 baseline	1,500-2,000 above 31 January 2012 baseline
Schools coordinating with health/allied health or other professionals to strengthen schools' support for students with disabilities.	1. Number and/or numerical range of health/allied health or other professional to strengthen schools' support for students with disabilities 2. Number and/or numerical range of schools supported by health/allied health professionals	31 January 2012	0	5-20 above 31 January 2012 baseline	15-40 above 31 January 2012 baseline	15-40 above 31 January 2012 baseline
Supporting school principals and/or leadership teams to strengthen teachers' ability to assist students with disabilities.	Number and/or numerical range of principals and/or school leadership team staff supported to strengthen teachers' ability to assist students with disabilities	31 January 2012	0	25-150 above 31 January 2012 baseline	250-500 above 31 January 2012 baseline	500-800 above 31 January 2012 baseline
		31 January 2012	0	0-25 above 31 January 2012 baseline	250-400 above 31 January 2012 baseline	450-600 above 31 January 2012 baseline

### Project information

Each of the strategies for implementing the learning and support framework in NSW public schools support the objective of the National Partnership Agreement. That is, that Australian schools and teachers are better able to support students with disabilities, contributing to improved student learning experiences, educational outcomes and transitions to further education or work.

As outlined below, the Department's strategies for implementing the learning and support framework will contribute to the achievement of the following National Partnership Agreement outcomes:

- Students with disabilities have improved learning experiences and educational outcomes.
- Schools are better able to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities, in collaboration with parents, carers, and students.
- Schools become more inclusive environments, in accordance with the Disability Standards for Education 2005, recognising the diversity students with disabilities bring to the school.
- Principals and school leaders are better able to support teachers and teachers are more capable of identifying and addressing the educational needs of students with disabilities.
- Teachers of students with disabilities have better access to expert support.
- Educational policy makers are informed of effective practice under this initiative.
- Parents, carers, school leaders, school administrators, teachers and the wider community are better informed about effective practices and strategies that benefit the educational achievement of students with disabilities.

#### Professional learning

The development and implementation of professional learning for teachers will build teachers' skills in making adjustments to support curriculum access. This supports effective collaborative partnerships and is vital for ensuring that schools are better able to meet the needs of their students with disabilities in collaboration with parents and their obligations toward students with disabilities under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

The project will develop and implement a range of targeted professional learning for teachers that supports teacher knowledge and skills in these areas over the duration of the National Partnership Agreement and increase training options for teachers in more than 2,000 schools. The project will contribute to a teacher workforce that is better equipped to meet the learning and support needs of the full range of students in their classrooms beyond the duration of the National Partnership Agreement.

The development and implementation of flexible, multi-modal training will enable teachers in a wide range of settings, including rural and remote locations to access professional learning according to their local needs and priorities.

#### Special education knowledge in regular schools

Implementation of a strategy that supports the establishment of a specialist teacher presence in every regular NSW public school paired with professional learning will enable important and essential long term, sustainable reform for the Department. This strategy enables the Department to build on the experiences and learnings from a twelve month trial of the reorganisation of available support services to provide a specialist teacher presence in more than 220 NSW public schools in one region. Providing a specialist teacher presence directly in every school enables classroom teachers to access additional support to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities more quickly, including those in rural and remote locations with limited access to other specialist service centres.

#### Special schools as centres of expertise

Locally developed and implemented projects that develop networks across schools provide a mechanism to harness and share the knowledge, expertise and specialist resources available or developed in more than 100 public special schools. This strategy will result in more schools being informed by expertise available within the system and enable effective practice for supporting students with disabilities to be identified and shared in the areas of: assistive technology; complex case support; communication and curriculum; transitions; and parent/community collaboration. These have been identified as areas where there is particular need to develop more effective practices to support successful student outcomes in the longer term in the context of a rapidly changing technological environment and pending implementation of an Australian curriculum.

#### Instruments to understand and support individual student learning needs

The development of a reliable and valid tool for teachers to profile the learning support needs of individual students and the development of standards, materials and training to support personalised learning and support planning for students with disabilities are important complementary strategies. Together, these projects will enable schools and teachers to be better able to identify the strengths, abilities, skills and needs of students with disabilities to inform their planning to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities, in collaboration with parents, carers, and students.

#### Expert support

Expanding specialist support services and resources to support students with disabilities across the full range of educational settings will improve access to expert support for their teachers. By trialling new and sustainable ways for supporting students with complex disabilities and/or highly specialised support needs in NSW public schools, including through assistive technologies, effective practice to improve the educational outcomes of students with disabilities can be identified and inform long term policy development about what works best in a range of educational settings to support these students.

#### Information to support teaching and learning

Expanding the provision of information through improved website and further development of specialist information resources for schools will support parents, carers, school leaders, school administrators, teachers and the wider community to be better informed about effective practices and strategies that benefit the educational achievement of students with disabilities in more than 2,000 schools. Accessible, consistent and reliable information will enable principals and school leaders to be better able to support teachers and teachers to be more capable of identifying and addressing the educational needs of students with disabilities.