

**building inclusive schools**



**pathways to the future**



**a report of the review of  
educational services for  
students with disabilities  
in government schools**

**TITLE: Pathways to the Future: A Report of the Review of Educational Services for Students with Disabilities in Government Schools**

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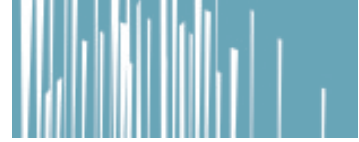
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For further information please contact:  
Student Services Directorate

Department of Education and Training  
151 Royal Street  
East Perth WA 6004

**Internet:** <http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au/disrev/>



# Foreword

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*Pathways to the Future: A Report of the Review of Educational Services for Students with Disabilities in Government Schools* presents a strong foundation upon which the Government and the Department of Education and Training can build safe, inclusive and engaging learning environments, thus meeting our commitments to students in government schools. The findings and recommendations of this Review identify emerging themes that have relevance for every school and all educators and members of the community.

The implementation of these recommendations will involve comprehensive planning and take time to achieve. There are recommendations that address culture, decision making, provision of resources and effective teaching and learning. All recommendations support quality educational practice and reflect the intent expressed by contributors to the Review.

I am confident that this report presents quality information and describes pathways to the future for the Department of Education and Training. The recommendations identify actions that will support quality learning opportunities for all students, in particular, those with disabilities and other educational needs.

I am pleased to be able to present this report to the Minister for Education and Training and look forward to achieving the inclusive education system described within it.

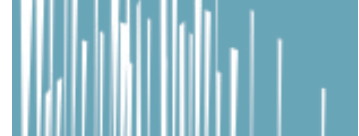
**Paul Albert**  
**Director General**  
**Department Of Education And Training**

February 2004



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# Overview of the Report of the Review of Educational Services for Students with Disabilities in Government Schools

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## Chapter 1 Pathways to the future

In April 2001, the Hon. Minister for Education, Alan Carpenter, MLA, announced a comprehensive review of educational services for students with disabilities (K-12) in government schools (the Review).

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Students with disabilities constitute 3 - 4 % of the total student population in Western Australian government schools. The majority of these students attend local neighbourhood schools with differing provision of resources, services or supports to the student and the school. During the Review the educational needs of students with disabilities have been considered in the context of other students who have identified educational needs including learning difficulties and a range of learning impairments. This shift in focus recognised that there are students who need adjustments to their teaching and learning program who do not necessarily have identified disabilities.

The Review has provided an opportunity to evaluate current educational provision for students with identified needs, identify quality practice and make recommendations for further development of an increasingly inclusive government school system. The findings and recommendations of the Review are therefore relevant to every school in the state, every educator and all members of the community. Since the commencement of the Review the Department of Education and Training has been established. Although the findings and recommendations have significant implications for schools, all sectors of the Department will need to consider their implications.



## Chapter 2 Describing Inclusive Education

An inclusive education system reflects the beliefs and practices of educational communities regarding the provision of quality education for all students. The concept of inclusivity is firmly embedded within the *Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten to Year 12 Education in Western Australia* (1998). The seven principles and indicators of this Review provide a cohesive planning framework for the Department and support inclusive education.

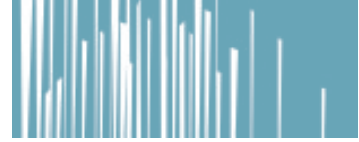
Teaching and learning adjustments provide students with equitable educational opportunities. Providing teaching and learning adjustments for an individual or group of students is integral to outcomes focused education and enables students to participate in appropriate educational programs. The development of outcomes focused education is of particular relevance to students with disabilities to ensure they experience success and achieve optimal learning outcomes.

In order to identify the scope, intensity and duration of the teaching and learning adjustments that are needed by students, an assessment tool to identify educational needs will be developed. Both the individual needs of students and the school context in which teaching and learning occurs are significant when identifying educational needs. Documenting educational needs and planning for adjustments will help determine the provision of resources, services and supports to schools while promoting effective, appropriate and engaging learning environments.

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### Recommendations

1. The Department of Education and Training adopts the principles of the Review and makes them explicit in all strategic planning to achieve inclusive practice.
2. The Department of Education and Training adopts the term *teaching and learning adjustments* to inform educational planning and provision of services and resources for students.



## Chapter 3 Creating Inclusive Learning Environments

Educational leadership and quality teaching are critical elements in the creation of inclusive learning environments for students. Effective school leaders and educators take responsibility for the overall quality of the learning program for all students. Expanding the capacity of all personnel to meet the needs of students requiring teaching and learning adjustments has been recognised as a key component of the comprehensive Building Inclusive Schools professional learning strategy.

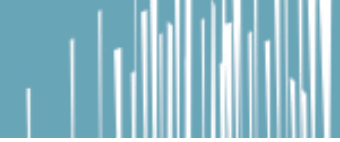
Every school needs access to specialist knowledge or expertise relating to educational provision for students with specific educational needs, particularly those with disabilities. Appropriate educational programs need to incorporate the evidence-based models of teaching and learning that are central to the achievement of optimal learning outcomes. The establishment of school-based learning support teams, with a coordinator, will encourage all teachers to participate in collaborative problem solving and provide timely access to support and advice within the local school setting.

The ability to make judgments about educational progress of students requiring teaching and learning adjustments and the manner in which achievement can be demonstrated will become increasingly important. Demonstration of accountability for student progress and achievement will be strengthened when the Department sets requirements and standards for documenting an individual student's educational needs, the achievement of learning outcomes and the provision of appropriate adjustments. The Curriculum Improvement Program provides opportunities to consider curriculum, assessment and reporting practices, materials and policy in terms of students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.

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### Recommendations

3. School leadership and management practices that facilitate the development of inclusive learning environments are promoted.
4. The capacity of teachers to meet the needs of a diverse range of students is strengthened by developing pedagogy to support inclusive practice and the establishment of learning support teams.

- 
5. An ongoing professional learning program is developed within the context of curriculum improvement and implemented to expand the capacity of all Department of Education and Training personnel to meet the needs of students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.
  6. The Department of Education and Training specifies its recommendations to pre-service institutions in the development of pedagogy to support inclusive practice.
  7. Curriculum, assessment and reporting materials, strategies and policy are refined in order to ensure that all students are able to demonstrate the outcomes achieved across learning areas.

## Chapter 4 Structuring Inclusive Schools

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The Department currently provides a variety of educational programs and services to meet the needs of students requiring teaching and learning adjustments. Throughout the Review there has been significant acknowledgement of the specialist educational programs and services developed in response to identified needs of students, schools or districts. Submissions and working party discussions supported ongoing development of inclusive educational programs and services in response to local needs. This would enable all students to participate in appropriate educational programs within their local school community wherever possible.

In order for all schools to be provided with support services that are responsive, flexible and focused on the changing needs of schools and students, it is proposed that a regular cycle of review and evaluation be established. Findings of this Review supported the development of consistent frameworks to guide evaluation and review processes. The educational outcomes achieved as well as the effectiveness of specialist services and supports need to be made explicit. Information regarding the specialist services provided by the Department, other government departments and community agencies is an integral component of this process. The evidence gathered will identify priorities and inform decisions regarding the provision of educational services and supports to schools and students.



The physical environments of schools will be evaluated and when necessary, modified to meet contemporary building standards and community expectations. Students' physical access requirements should not be a barrier to enrolment or educational opportunities. Inclusive campuses are proposed as an integral component of the development of inclusive schools. An inclusive campus consists of adjoining facilities with shared use of space and physical environments. Specialist facilities will be built as part of an inclusive campus to facilitate quality and appropriate educational programs for students with the most intensive educational, physical or health care needs. It is acknowledged that considerable forward planning will be necessary to ensure that existing schools are modified and that new schools are able to meet the needs of students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments.

### Recommendations

8. Services, programs and facilities, including specialist facilities for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments, are provided within the principles of inclusive education.
9. Planning and design of schools will support inclusive practices through a staged capital works program.
10. A framework for ongoing review and evaluation is implemented to ensure coordinated and effective educational provision for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.
11. Educational provision and planning to meet the needs of a diverse range of students is informed by the practice of earliest possible intervention at all phases of schooling.
12. The Department of Education and Training develops a framework to guide and inform the negotiation of agreements with service providers in meeting the needs of a diverse range of students.



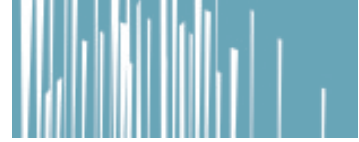
## Chapter 5 Resourcing Inclusive Schools

Resources mean not only what is available in the financial budget, but also the human, physical and social capital that exists in schools. In order to provide innovative and effective educational programs, schools need to transform financial resources into authentic inclusive educational supports for students. Encouraging schools in this endeavour necessitates a reconsideration of the resources available and the mechanisms for allocating resources to schools.

The Review articulated matters to be considered in the development of equitable, efficient and responsive processes for resource provision to schools. This included streamlining information gathering and establishing processes for recording this data. Localised decision making, validation and moderation processes will support school and district responsiveness to student needs.

It is proposed that the Department adopts educational needs as the foundation for identifying the teaching and learning adjustments required. This will involve the development of an educational needs assessment tool that becomes integral to the allocation of resources. Such an emphasis will facilitate resource provision that is equitable and not determined by disability or school type. Providing every school with the ability and flexibility to respond to the educational needs of all students is crucial.

The Department needs to maintain a balance between allocating resources based on individual student needs and resourcing the school as a whole. Further analysis of current funding arrangements and resource provision is necessary. This will provide an evidence base for implementing change. Unless complementary and transparent funding programs are established, there will be increased pressure to identify students as being eligible for direct or targeted provision of resources. Commitment to continue to provide direct or targeted resources for those students who require significant teaching and learning adjustments was identified as central to an approach based upon educational needs.



## Recommendations

13. An educational needs model of resource allocation is adopted to ensure students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments have equitable and flexible access to resources.
14. Moderation, review and decision making regarding resource allocation for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments is carried out as close as possible to schools.
15. Current arrangements are examined and more effective strategies for the provision of financial resources to schools are developed.

## Chapter 6 Supporting Inclusive Schools

Commonwealth and State legislation relating to the delivery of schooling and disability discrimination provide the framework for the development of appropriate educational provision for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments. Schools have a responsibility to take action to meet students' educational needs within clear policy expectations. Quality and readily accessible information helps create shared understandings and sets explicit parameters regarding decision making to support the provision of appropriate education and teaching and learning adjustments for students.

Parents and educators working with students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments have a mutual interest in and commitment to school improvement because of the benefits that emerge for these students. An effective school establishes a climate and ethos that strengthens the inclusive nature of the school and offers support and educational opportunities to students, educators and other members of the school community.

The challenge for the Department is to integrate required actions and obligations identified within legislation and the strategic development of processes, programs and policies to support an inclusive school system.



## Recommendations

16. Quality information is provided to school communities to facilitate effective decision making to improve outcomes for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.
17. The *School Education Act 1999* and *Regulations 2000* are reviewed to ensure consistency with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
18. All policies and procedures of the Department of Education and Training are reviewed to ensure compliance with legislation and the incorporation of the principles of inclusive education.

## Chapter 7 Sustaining Inclusive Schools

Developing an inclusive education system requires that changes in the education environment are anticipated in order to facilitate rapid and flexible responses to student, school and community needs. Data collection concerning the effectiveness of resource use and school and student performance needs to reflect strong commitment to teaching and learning.

Ongoing improvement in the equitable provision of appropriate resources and services to support inclusive education for all students is necessary. Establishing a Department taskforce with appropriate expertise will support a systematic approach to implementing changes. This would ensure that schools are supported in providing programs that address the educational needs of all students, including those who require teaching and learning adjustments.

## Recommendations

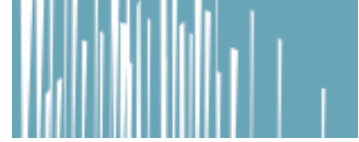
19. A process is developed to monitor and evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the recommendations of this Review.
20. A taskforce is established to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of this Review.





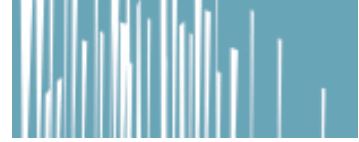
# Recommendations

1. The Department of Education and Training adopts the principles of the Review and makes them explicit in all strategic planning to achieve inclusive practice.
2. The Department of Education and Training adopts the term teaching and learning adjustments to inform educational planning and provision of services and resources for students.
3. School leadership and management practices that facilitate the development of inclusive learning environments are promoted.
4. The capacity of teachers to meet the needs of a diverse range of students is strengthened by developing pedagogy to support inclusive practice and the establishment of learning support teams.
5. An ongoing professional learning program is developed within the context of curriculum improvement and implemented to expand the capacity of all Department of Education and Training personnel to meet the needs of students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.
6. The Department of Education and Training specifies its recommendations to pre-service institutions in the development of pedagogy to support inclusive practice.
7. Curriculum, assessment and reporting materials, strategies and policy are refined in order to ensure that all students are able to demonstrate the outcomes achieved across learning areas.
8. Services, programs and facilities, including specialist facilities for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments, are provided within the principles of inclusive education.
9. Planning and design of schools will support inclusive practices through a staged capital works program.



10. A framework for ongoing review and evaluation is implemented to ensure coordinated and effective educational provision for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.
11. Educational provision and planning to meet the needs of a diverse range of students is informed by the practice of earliest possible intervention at all phases of schooling.
12. The Department of Education and Training develops a framework to guide and inform the negotiation of agreements with service providers in meeting the needs of a diverse range of students.
13. An educational needs model of resource allocation is adopted to ensure students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments have equitable and flexible access to resources.
14. Moderation, review and decision making regarding resource allocation for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments is carried out as close as possible to schools.
15. Current arrangements are examined and more effective strategies for the provision of financial resources to schools are developed.
16. Quality information is provided to school communities to facilitate effective decision making to improve outcomes for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.
17. The *School Education Act 1999* and *Regulations 2000* are reviewed to ensure consistency with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
18. All policies and procedures of the Department of Education and Training are reviewed to ensure compliance with legislation and the incorporation of the principles of inclusive education.
19. A process is developed to monitor and evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the recommendations of this Review.
20. A taskforce is established to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of this Review.





# Chapter 1:

## Pathways to the Future


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*Coping with the burden of having a child with severe disabilities can be exhausting and no parent welcomes the added grief of having to battle the system to achieve what is best for their child.*

(Individual submission)

This report presents pathways to the future and provides a blueprint for the development of inclusive schooling in Western Australian government schools. The development of inclusive schools is everyone's business not just the concern of people working in specialised programs. The Review of Educational Services for Students with Disabilities in Government Schools (the Review) is relevant to every school in the state, every educator and all members of the community. The outstanding work already undertaken by school communities in managing diversity is recognised. Students are not all the same when they come to school. They bring with them a range of personal and social attributes which affect their learning. The new and challenging paradigm for all school communities is to recognise and value the differences within the student population.

An overview of the Review processes and the educational and historical context within which it has taken place are presented in this chapter. The major trends and concepts which emerged during the Review are introduced prior to detailed consideration later in the report. Since the commencement of the Review the Department of Education and Training has been established. The amalgamation provides opportunities to develop and provide education and training programs that are seamless and responsive to student and community needs. The principles of inclusive education and the type of education system they describe have the potential to underpin the educational services provided by the



Department of Education and Training. Although the findings and recommendations have significant implications for schools, all sectors of the Department will need to consider their implications.

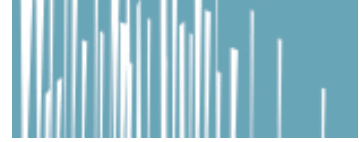
### **Describing the process of the Review**

The Hon. Minister for Education, Alan Carpenter, MLA, announced a comprehensive review of educational services for students with disabilities in government schools in April 2001. The Review was called to examine the current provision of supports for students with disabilities and to identify the principles of effective and forward looking practices to enhance the delivery of supports for these students. Students with disabilities constitute 3 - 4 % of the total student population in Western Australian government schools.

There were two distinct stages to the Review. Both are acknowledged as having had broadly based and comprehensive consultative processes with strong contributions and feedback from within the Department, professional associations, other agencies, community groups and individual parents and educators. Public submissions were received, representative working parties investigated key issues, invitations to attend community forums were accepted and consultants conducted independent research. A full description of the conduct of the Review is included in Appendix 1.

Early analysis of the information received indicated that the Department's range of services, programs and facilities for students are effective and highly valued. There were also suggestions made for areas requiring further attention or investigation. The findings and initial recommendations were presented in a *Discussion Paper* (2002). These included:

- the importance of school leadership and professional learning for educators;
- the importance of a collaborative whole school approach;
- the need to provide clear, transparent educational information and expanded enrolment opportunities for students with disabilities;
- the need for equitable and flexible funding arrangements;
- the need for combined services across government departments and community agencies.



## International and Australian markers


The Review is a response to international, national and local trends and imperatives. Over the last two decades a momentous change in public attitudes towards the education of children and young people with disabilities has taken place. Community demands for more inclusive models of education where students with disabilities have the opportunity to be educated on the same campus or in the same classroom as non-disabled peers have grown. This change has its roots in the social justice initiatives that have transformed social institutions in the later part of the twentieth century.

At the international level, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation gave a considerable boost to the inclusion movement through the Salamanca Statement 1994 by urging all governments to adopt inclusive educational policies by enrolling all students in local schools. This was reinforced more recently in the Dakar Framework for Action 2000. In the United States educational services for students with disabilities are guaranteed under legislative initiatives such as the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 1997*. In the United Kingdom the *Education Act 1993* specifies that local education authorities have a responsibility to integrate students with special educational needs, but is not prescriptive about how outcomes are to be determined.

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This Review has been conducted within the context of the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, and the collaboration on the part of the various education authorities to reach agreement on recommendations relating to Disability Standards for Education. Since 1992 the *Disability Discrimination Act* has made it illegal to deny access and participation in community activities, or to harass or victimise individuals with disabilities. The Act covers a broad range of past or current disabilities, imputed disabilities and possible future disabilities. Each State is obliged to review a range of areas of public policy including employment and transport in addition to education to ensure access for people with disabilities. All Australian States have undertaken similar reviews.

It needs to be noted that the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* allows for programs that are specifically designed for students with disabilities to be offered as educational options. Discrimination occurs when a specialist



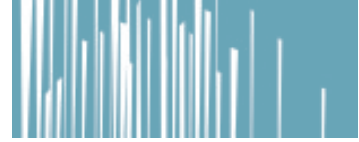
program is presented as the only option, or is used as a barrier to a future placement in the local class. The Disability Standards for Education provide clarity for all schools and training institutions in relation to disability discrimination in education. It has been anticipated that implementation of the Standards may extend the claims for the provision of teaching and learning adjustments. The obligations and responsibilities described in the Standards extend beyond enrolment to curriculum access, participation and achievement.

In December 2002 the Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Reference Committee published its report, *Education of Students with Disabilities* (Senate Committee inquiry). The recommendations contained in the report are wide ranging, covering training, professional learning, inclusive education as well as funding and legal issues. The Senate Committee inquiry provides strong support for the recommendations contained in this report for Western Australian government schools and other training institutions.

### **The Western Australian educational environment**

The majority of students with disabilities attend local schools with differing access to resources, services and supports for both the student and the school. Prior to the 1980s the provision of daytime activities and programs for children with severe and multiple disabilities was the responsibility of the Authority for Intellectual Handicap, now known as the Disability Services Commission. These students were excluded from government schools until the implementation of the *Commonwealth Schools Commission Report 1973*, which recommended that children should not be segregated from their peers unless absolutely necessary. The move to provide educational programs for students with severe and multiple disabilities in special schools was seen as an inclusive strategy at the time.

In line with the recommendations of the *Report of the Committee of Inquiry Into Education in Western Australia* (Beazley 1984), the Department of Education established non-categorical education support centres on the campuses of local schools. These centres aimed to provide small group intensive instruction for students with intellectual disabilities and to offer services to students in local schools who were otherwise ineligible for any specialised support. The original intent was to provide services and support on the basis of educational needs. The *Changes to Services for Children in Need of Educational Support 1984* policy clearly stated that opportunities should exist for parents' participation in



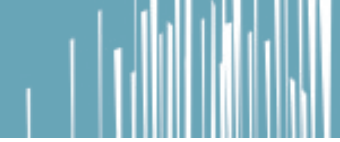
decisions about both the place of enrolment and the educational program for their children.

In keeping with this move, other facilities underwent significant changes. The move towards local enrolment for students with sensory disabilities was complemented by the establishment of specialist programs and support to local schools through the Vision Impairment Service and the Western Australian Institute of Deaf Education. Mildred Creek School for students with Autism closed, and the students made a transition into local schools. Outreach services were developed to address the needs of students with challenging behaviours or significant difficulties with learning. These services have been increasingly provided by the socio-psychological education resource (SPER) centres and the Centre for Inclusive Schooling.

The Department of Education commenced the Inclusion Program Trial for students with intellectual disabilities in 1995. This program has provided full-time supported enrolment in local classes for students who would otherwise have been required to enrol at an education support facility. The number of students supported on the program has increased every year. Independent evaluations of the program have reported generally positive responses from all major participants including teachers, administrators, education assistants and parents (Chadbourne 1997, Tuetteman et al 2000). Each of these developments reflected a growing awareness of the benefits for students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers to learn and develop alongside one another.

The report from the *Ministerial Task Force for The Education of Students with Disabilities and Specific Learning Disabilities 1993*, chaired by Dr Ruth Shean, investigated pre-service teacher education and professional development, early identification of specific learning disabilities, parental involvement and access to information and advice. The provision of a strategic and coordinated support program in schools, for students with disabilities and specific learning disabilities was also investigated.

The Shean Report made wide-ranging recommendations including the implementation of individual education plans for students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties, as well as the preparation of guidelines for the



integration of students with disabilities into local classes. This report also included recommendations for restructuring pre-service teacher education programs to ensure that all pre-primary, primary and secondary teachers would be able to recognise when students were experiencing difficulties due to disabilities or specific learning difficulties. It also recommended the design and implementation of classroom programs appropriate to student needs and access to additional support and resources.

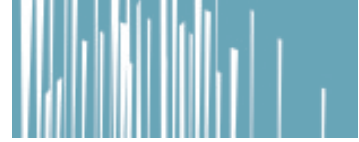
Although significant progress has been made in the intervening years, many of the themes identified by earlier reviews have been revisited in this Review.

### **The present**

The *Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten to Year 12 Education in Western Australia* (1998) introduced outcomes focused education throughout the system. The concept of inclusivity is central to the Curriculum Framework, and embodies the notion that all students are valued as learners and are integral to the school community. The Curriculum Improvement Program and the Students at Educational Risk: Making the Difference Strategy have assisted schools to adopt an outcomes focused approach to education and to develop innovative programs in response to identified student needs. Both strategies reflect current educational directions in terms of the identification of educational needs and the provision of relevant engaging education.

Teachers and principals are embracing the philosophy of the Curriculum Framework and are delivering programs for students within the current policy guidelines. Existing Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation, and the implementation of the Disability Standards for Education, provide an ideal opportunity for the Department to refocus on the issues surrounding the quality of educational programs and their delivery.

Through the ongoing Curriculum Improvement Program, the Department is well placed to implement strong support for teachers to provide innovative and relevant learning environments and programs for all students. The curriculum and pedagogical focus of this Review provide an opportunity to build on the strong foundation already developed within schools.



The *Ministerial Taskforce on Support Services and Resources Provided to Government Schools 2001*, chaired by Professor Alan Robson, provides recommendations for the development of strategies to ensure that resources and services are efficiently allocated and utilised to maximise achievement of learning outcomes for students in government schools. Local decision making, enhanced outcomes for all students, collaboration, flexibility and responsiveness to local contexts are all concepts reflected in the current report.


### **Towards a social model for developing inclusive schools**

The Review strongly supported a move away from a traditional medical model of disability and towards the adoption of a social model in which the educational needs of students are paramount in the provision of appropriate supports and services. It was recommended in the *Discussion Paper (2002)* that the remainder of the Review process encompass those students identified as having *special educational needs* rather than the more narrowly focused students with disabilities. Special educational needs incorporated students with disabilities, learning difficulties and a range of learning impairments. This expanded the proportion of students under consideration to approximately 18% of the student population.

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In line with national and international trends, a social construct of disability in education is promoted in this report, rather than a reliance on traditional constructs implied by special educational needs. Working party deliberations identified the negative connotations associated with the term special educational needs. This sees problems as existing within the student rather than focusing on the adjustments that need to be made to the teaching and learning environment to ensure access to the curriculum by the student. The teaching and learning environment encompasses curriculum, educational experiences and the social interactions between adults and children as well as the physical school environment.

The paradigm exemplified through *teaching and learning adjustments* will facilitate an outcomes focused approach to teaching and learning for students with disabilities and will include a wider range of students with special educational needs. The concept of teaching and learning adjustments has emerged during the later stages of the Review. This concept acknowledges the necessity articulated within the Curriculum Framework to differentiate learning



experiences for students by making adjustments to the teaching and learning environment. An outcomes focused approach to education is facilitated by making appropriate adjustments in response to identified student needs. The concept of teaching and learning adjustments is further described in Chapter 2.

### **Principles of inclusive education**

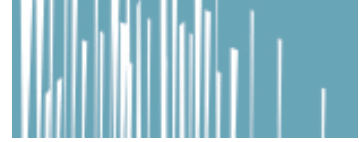
From the issues identified in Stage 1 of the Review, seven principles of quality inclusive education and indicators were developed. They describe the characteristics of an education system that would deliver quality services, programs and support for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments. The principles are inexorably linked. They identify clear commitments from enrolment through to informed decision making regarding educational planning and provision. This means access to appropriate teaching and learning adjustments and collaborative support of a seamless delivery of services that respond to individual needs. Widespread positive endorsement for the seven principles and their indicators was received across all respondent groups. The principles are further explored in Chapter 2.

Each of the following chapters reflects the evidence of the submissions, research and the deliberations of working parties that have informed the development of the twenty recommendations of the Review. These recommendations are presented as a means of determining the pathways towards an inclusive system of education.

# The seven principles of inclusive education







# Chapter 2:

## Describing Inclusive Education

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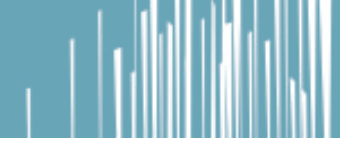
*We need to move away from the stand of “we know best” and the “one size fits all” support for students with disabilities to a culture that has at its heart the question – “will this improve the outcomes for students with disabilities?”*

(Individual submission)

It is important that schools are encouraged to create innovative teaching and learning environments that provide what is necessary to ensure that all students are able to access meaningful learning experiences. A commitment to promoting social justice and equity has been an integral part of educational reviews and reports in Western Australia for a number of years. The information provided to this Review was no different, and has required that there be a reconsideration of the manner in which schooling is provided for identified groups of students.

This chapter further describes the seven principles of inclusive education and teaching and learning adjustments. These are critical concepts for the provision of quality inclusive education to all students. Shared understandings of these concepts will enable educators, parents, students and other members of the school community to join in collaborative planning and decision making about quality educational provision for all.

In a Western Australian context the term *inclusion* has become synonymous with the full-time participation of students with intellectual disabilities in local classes. Submissions and working parties emphasised that the concept of *inclusivity* is much broader and reflects a major shift in the beliefs and practices of educational communities regarding the provision of services for all students.



Inclusivity is not just for students with disabilities, but also for all students, educators, parents, families and community members. Inclusivity is an attitude or belief system that becomes embedded in policies, practices and processes. It needs to be nurtured in every educational setting. It is a principle that is firmly embedded within the Curriculum Framework. Ballard (1997) states that a school with an inclusive orientation defines differentness as an ordinary part of human experience.

### **What is an inclusive school?**

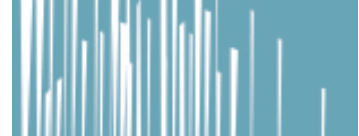
An inclusive school community is characterised by students and parents being welcomed, valued and treated as an integral part of the school. Inclusive schools accept that community diversity is the reality, and they value each student as a unique learner with unique contributions to make to the learning of others. Inclusive schools develop educational practices that incorporate everything that is known about good quality teaching and learning, taking into account the unique characteristics of the school community. The philosophy of the Curriculum Framework is apparent within the school learning environment and includes education that is focused on outcomes. Community-based instruction, use of technology in the classroom and collaboration between teachers, parents, families and community members support this focus.

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Inclusive schools are characterised by the equitable distribution of resources in support of whole school improvement. Systematic and cyclical review and assessment of their practices and culture is undertaken to inform future planning for inclusive practice. An effective inclusive school will develop tools and strategies that reflect the context of the school, its goals and priorities. Such tools and strategies will assist the school in identifying progress along a continuum of inclusive educational practice. Schools will thus be able to identify new priorities, where effective practice is in evidence and how best to move forward along this continuum. The power of these sentiments was strongly endorsed throughout the submissions and the working party deliberations.

### **The seven principles of inclusive education**

The seven principles and indicators of inclusive education have been widely acknowledged as describing the characteristics of an education system capable of delivering quality services and support for all students requiring teaching and learning adjustments in Western Australian government schools (Crosby 2002).



The principles provide a cohesive framework within which local and systemic planning can occur. The incorporation of these principles into the Department's strategic planning cycle would ensure that each becomes an integral component of planning at all levels within the system. Appendix 2 presents the indicators of each principle.

#### PRINCIPLE 1 **Providing access and participation**

##### **All students have the right to enrol, access and participate in schooling which meets their individual needs**

All parents of children with disabilities will have the opportunity to make application for enrolment in line with the principle that no child should be denied access to his or her local neighbourhood school. The Department will work with parents to support informed decision making by providing clear comprehensive information about the programs, services or supports available in government schools.

#### PRINCIPLE 2 **Valuing diversity**

##### **All levels of the system value diversity and operate within an inclusive framework**

The Department will support all personnel to develop inclusive practices. Comprehensive professional learning will support the development of an inclusive education system that values and recognises the diversities within all school communities.

#### PRINCIPLE 3 **Ensuring local decisions and adjustments**

##### **A range of effective and appropriate adjustments is provided to ensure access, participation and achievement**

Schools will be able to select and adopt services, supports and programs for students within the context of the local school community. Effective use of resources and supports will enable schools to better meet student needs through the creation of flexible learning environments.



PRINCIPLE 4      **Implementing a new framework for resource allocation**

**Adjustments are provided on a needs basis and are equitably resourced**

Resources will be allocated more equitably, removing inconsistencies in the nature of services or supports provided to schools and districts for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments. Resourcing will reflect the nature and intensity of the teaching and learning adjustments required to enable students to access the curriculum.

PRINCIPLE 5      **Matching pedagogy with student needs**

**The system supports the development of pedagogy to meet individual student needs**

The Department aims to ensure that quality practice standards will be applied to the development of educational provision for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments. A sustained program of appropriate curriculum and ongoing support for teachers will promote the development of more effective pedagogical practice. Disseminating new initiatives and practices across the system will promote quality educational provision for all students.

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PRINCIPLE 6      **Delivering responsive programs and services**

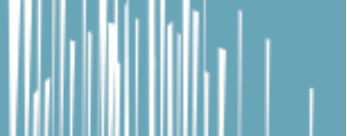
**The range of coordinated programs and services provided is flexible and delivered according to student needs**

Providing a range of programs, services and specialist facilities will ensure that the needs of students are met and that appropriate supports are put in place to ensure access to meaningful learning environments and experiences. The need to tailor educational programs to meet the changing needs of students, and the critical importance of early intervention at all phases of schooling in achieving optimal educational outcomes, is promoted.

PRINCIPLE 7      **Collaborating for better outcomes**

**Services are provided and supported by collaborative models and partnerships**

Strong links between the Department and other professionals providing services and supports for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments will be



fostered. Efficient case management practices will ensure collaboration between all parties and use of quality information to inform educational planning for each student.

### Recommendation 1

**The Department of Education and Training adopts the principles of the Review and makes them explicit in all strategic planning to achieve inclusive practice.**

### Descriptions of disability

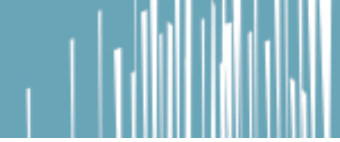
During the first stage of the Review it became clear that the *School Education Act 1999* description of disability was insufficient to ensure that the Department of Education would be able to meet its potential obligations under the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and under other anti-discrimination legislation. The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* provides a description of disability that encompasses a larger proportion of students with more diverse characteristics than that used in Western Australia.

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Within the *School Education Act 1999* and *Regulations 2000*, 'disability' means a condition -

- (a) which is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment, or a combination of these impairments;
- (b) which is permanent or likely to be permanent;
- (c) which may or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature;
- (d) which results in:
  - (i) a substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility; and
  - (ii) a need for continuing support services.

The need for clarity regarding which conditions constitute a disability has been reinforced at the national level. The recent Senate Committee inquiry into the education of students with disabilities highlighted the tensions created when descriptions of disability are closely scrutinised. The inquiry strongly recommended that there be work undertaken at a national level to establish common descriptions and definitions of the disabilities that are contained within



the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The introduction of the Disability Standards for Education further highlights the requirement for the Department to clarify the links between identified disabilities and adjustments or modifications to the educational program.

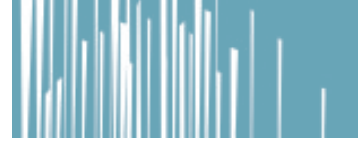
At a State level, there are some specific issues to be resolved by the Department in collaboration with the Department of Health, Disability Services Commission, professional service providers and advocacy groups. This will ensure that there is diagnostic consistency and predictability in the provision of supports or services to children and young people with disabilities in schools and other community settings.

A move towards a social model of disability acknowledges that accurate diagnosis of disability can be of value in an educational context. The impact of a student's disability and its related impairment or handicap in the teaching and learning situation is the real matter of consequence for school communities and educators. Understanding the typical patterns of learning, socialisation or emotional development associated with particular disabilities can provide educators with strong guidance as they develop appropriate educational provision for students (Ashman & Elkins 2000, Hamill 2000, Fletcher & Heath 2002).

The majority of working party members indicated that the current dependency on the importance of diagnosis of disability to determine eligibility for the allocation of resources should diminish as an educational needs approach is adopted. The Department's current operational definitions for programs, services and resources are presented in Appendix 3.

### **Teaching and learning adjustments**

Educators and parents agree that it is necessary to make adjustments in order to provide all students with equity of educational opportunities, choices and challenges. Such differentiations facilitate the delivery of outcomes focused education as described in the Curriculum Framework. Providing teaching and learning adjustments for an individual or group of students takes into account the interactions between learners, educators and learning environments and is an integral part of quality teaching. Adjustments are described as “measures or actions taken by an education provider that have the effect of assisting a



student with a disability” (*Disability Discrimination Act Standards for Education Draft 9 July 2003: 6*).


The concept of teaching and learning adjustments is affirmative and inclusive of all students. It challenges the dependency on traditional models of disability to inform educational planning and provision for students with disabilities. In an educational setting, teaching and learning adjustments may include:

- appropriate technology or specialised equipment;
- differentiated curriculum;
- use of small groups for explicit teaching;
- education assistant time to support the teacher to support the student;
- alternative methods of assessment or special examination arrangements;
- modifications to the school buildings or grounds.

By focusing on appropriate teaching and learning adjustments, recognition is given to the central role of the school and the classroom teacher in providing a supportive teaching and learning environment. It shifts the emphasis to the environment in which teaching and learning occurs. This notion of adapting the educational environment to meet the individual needs of the student is intrinsic to the intent of the Curriculum Framework. An effective teaching and learning cycle involves planning, delivering monitoring, assessing and reporting on student performance relating to learning outcomes. This information can then be used for making judgments about the progress of students and planning for future improvement.

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Students with disabilities often require teaching and learning adjustments to facilitate curriculum access, participation and achievement of learning outcomes. Other students experiencing ongoing difficulties with learning will also require teaching and learning adjustments to ensure the achievement of optimal learning outcomes. The central issues thus become the scope, intensity and duration of the adjustments that need to be provided. Not every student with a disability will require ongoing teaching and learning adjustments, nor can it be assumed that students with the same disability will require equivalent teaching and learning adjustments.



Where the teaching and learning adjustments are of sufficient scope, intensity or duration they would be considered to be significant teaching and learning adjustments. The provision of significant teaching and learning adjustments will address identified student needs including:

- academic and social skills and understandings;
- essential life skills and independence;
- self-care and the ability to be organised;
- behaviour and self-regulation;
- sensory, physical or medical limitations.

### **Assessing educational needs**


Submissions from parents and working party deliberations both highlighted the necessity for schools and teachers to identify student need prior to the implementation of an appropriate educational program. This essential component of the teaching and learning cycle is reinforced within the Curriculum Framework and by independent research undertaken as part of the Review (Fletcher & Heath 2002). Working parties and the independent research agreed that until educational needs are identified and appropriate educational planning undertaken, students continue to be at risk of not achieving optimal outcomes.

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Developing a simple way to represent the educational needs of students to inform and support educational planning, assessment and resource provision was identified as a challenge and a priority within working party deliberations. An educational needs assessment will identify, in a quantifiable manner, the scope, intensity and duration of teaching and learning adjustments required. The development of a unified process for determining the need for teaching and learning adjustments to be applied across all schools is desirable.

The needs of students who require significant teaching and learning adjustments will be addressed in this process. The development of an educational needs assessment will need to consider the implications of the following factors:

- progress and achievement of learning outcomes;
- functional limitations evident in the school environment;
- curriculum-based assessment criteria;
- school characteristics that need to be considered in the provision of services and resources.

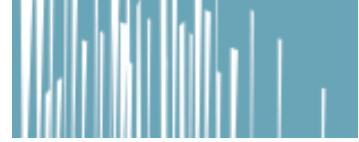


The priority is developing an educational needs assessment tool that incorporates the needs of all students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments.

### **Recommendation 2**

**The Department of Education and Training adopts the term *teaching and learning adjustments* to inform educational planning and provision of services and resources for students.**





# Chapter 3:

## Creating Inclusive Teaching and Learning Environments

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*All the work done in this field points to the classroom teacher as the overriding factor in the success of inclusion. A positive or enthusiastic attitude, a flexible approach in the classroom and willingness to assume responsibility for the learning of the child invariably produce successful inclusion.*


(Individual submission)

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Many educators in city, regional and country schools in Western Australia have created educational learning environments that readily accommodate a diverse range of learners with outstanding success and innovation. They have developed a repertoire of teaching, assessment and evaluation strategies to address student differences and individual needs. What is needed is to affirm and expand these skills and knowledge.

This chapter identifies the characteristics of inclusive teaching and learning environments in terms of philosophies and practices. Educational leadership and quality teaching are considered as critical elements. The findings of the Review regarding leadership, professional learning, curriculum access, assessment and reporting are presented.

Curriculum flexibility and the ability to selectively adapt strategies and programs, sometimes in only very minor ways, to meet more effectively the needs of an individual or group of students, will go far in creating teaching and learning environments that support and include all students. Information and evidence presented to the Review, however, suggests that many educators



express concern when asked to educate a student who has been identified as having a disability. Throughout the Review process, a consistent call for appropriate professional learning to provide an understanding of these students and their unique needs was made by parents, teachers, administrators and academics. This reflected the recognition that without the provision of appropriate support for educators to ensure equity of learning opportunities within a safe and supportive environment, students will continue to be at risk of not achieving their educational potential.

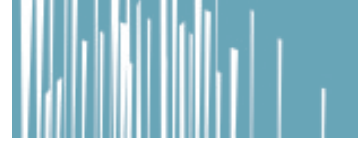
### **Leading inclusive learning environments**

Submissions and information gathered throughout the Review highlighted the central role played by school leaders in creating and sustaining successful inclusive learning environments. Deliberations during the Review identified key competencies for leaders of inclusive schools. As anticipated, these reinforced the directions that have emerged in the leadership framework being developed by the Department in collaboration with the Leadership Centre and Murdoch University. Professor Brian Caldwell's keynote address, *A Blueprint For Leadership For The Successful Transformation Of Schools In The 21<sup>st</sup> Century* 2001 and Dr Loretta Giorcelli's presentation that commenced the Building Inclusive Schools strategy reinforced these concepts.

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In summary, inclusive schools have leaders who:

- develop the conceptual understandings to support inclusive practices and reduce discrimination;
- hold personal values that are primarily about learning;
- take responsibility for the overall quality of the learning program for all students;
- create professional learning communities to support all personnel;
- develop a whole school approach that values individual differences;
- are committed to responding appropriately to the needs of an increasingly diverse population of students;
- build strong relationships within their school communities;
- lead school teams that devote their energies to supporting teachers in the development of effective and inclusive classroom practice;
- provide innovation and flexibility in the management of school resources;
- systematically and cyclically undertake the review and assessment of school practices and culture;



- streamline processes for the provision, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning adjustments.

Leadership frameworks will complement the *School Accountability Framework* which provides the existing tool for reflection and school improvement for all schools. Developing and implementing competencies and standards would enable all educational leaders to develop a shared understanding of the qualities required for quality leadership in inclusive schools.

Findings of the Review present an opportunity for the Department to investigate management structures, career paths, school classifications and organisational structures to ensure that each supports the development of an inclusive education system. It was acknowledged that these issues pose challenges in developing inclusive school communities. Leading these communities will require the collaborative efforts of those familiar with the complexities of meeting the needs of students with disabilities with their mainstream colleagues.

It will be essential to draw upon the expertise and skills that have been developed in specialist programs and services, in particular education support. The expertise and leadership of education support personnel will be integral to building inclusive schools that successfully engage students with disabilities in learning programs that facilitate optimal learning outcomes.

The issue of governance was highlighted within working party deliberations, particularly where there is more than one principal on the one campus. It is essential that the Department take appropriate action to provide clarity in relation to career paths for all personnel involved in the administration of inclusive schools.

Working party deliberations identified that the attitudes of school leaders must support the achievement of genuine participation for all students and reflect the intent of relevant legislation. Submissions, particularly those from parents, highlighted variation between schools from the point of view of experiencing an acceptance and willingness to meet the unique needs of their child. This variation attests to the need to further build, within school leaders and other personnel, comprehensive awareness and understanding of the contemporary social and legislative context in which schools operate.



### Recommendation 3

**School leadership and management practices that facilitate the development of inclusive learning environments are promoted.**

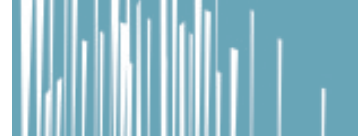
#### Teaching in inclusive learning environments

Independent research submitted to the Review (Jenkins 2002b) suggests that there are three foundations upon which inclusive teachers base their classroom practice:

- a focus on improving learning as a first priority;
- being lifelong learners who create learning environments that are conducive to effective learning for all students;
- understanding the need for negotiated curriculum planning and programming to provide effective teaching and learning environments.

Throughout the Review teachers were acknowledged as already demonstrating quality practice in their daily work. Teachers have a responsibility to provide appropriate educational programs that meet students' individual needs. Many have a comprehensive repertoire of strategies and skills and the confidence to draw on relevant expertise and information. They select and adapt curricula and instructional methods as required to meet individual needs of students (Westwood 2001). Formative evaluation of the Curriculum Improvement Program further reinforces that many teachers incorporate the learning outcomes of the Curriculum Framework and identify specific achievement targets for the students they teach.

No one expects all teachers to be familiar with all of the characteristics of the full range of disabling conditions they may encounter. Openness to new information and the capacity to build upon existing skills was reported to be central to successful inclusive practice. Parent submissions often provided explicit recognition that the teachers' willingness to find out more about how to teach their child was of fundamental importance. As local research suggests, it is often making small adjustments to existing repertoires in response to unusual circumstances that provides successful management in the inclusive classroom (Chalmers 1998, Tuettemann et al 2000).




Appropriate educational programs reflect evidence-based models of teaching and learning that have been widely accepted as being central to positive outcomes for students. Fletcher and Heath (2002) and Jenkins (2002b) reinforced that principles of explicit teaching at appropriate stages of learning maximise student access, participation and achievement with benefits for all students. Fletcher and Heath's research and working party deliberations indicated that teachers generally need more support in the effective identification of specific educational needs and the provision of age-appropriate intervention or educational programs at all phases of schooling.

In the transition to outcomes focused education, teachers have engaged in careful analysis of their existing assessment strategies in all learning areas. Assessment is acknowledged as having a central role in effective planning. A strong theme that emerged during working party deliberations was the recognition that for many students requiring teaching and learning adjustments, it is the design of responsive and appropriate assessment that enables the demonstration of learning in ways that are relevant and meaningful. Effective assessment will take into account what is known by the teacher about the students' ways of learning and participating in the educational program. Assessment tasks can then be structured to be inclusive, fair and individualised as necessary, thus enabling students to make connections between their experiences in and out of school and demonstrate optimal learning outcomes.

Findings relating to the importance of the teaching and learning cycle within this Review were consistent with those in other reports, including the Shean Report and the report on primary students with learning difficulties, Mapping the Territory (Louden et al 2000). Contributors to the Review reinforced the need to provide further assistance to enable all teachers to develop appropriate educational programs for those students requiring considerably differentiated learning experiences.

### **School teams supporting inclusive learning environments**

Evidence gathered throughout the Review suggests that school teams make a significant contribution to the successful inclusion of those students who pose the greatest challenges in schools (Centre for Inclusive Schooling 2002, Students At Educational Risk Formative Study 2002). They do this by acknowledging, validating and sharing the expertise that already exists within the school community. They utilise and expand upon relevant educational



research and department strategies. In particular, the coordinators for students at educational risk, district and visiting support personnel and the Getting It Right: Literacy and Numeracy specialist teachers were cited as playing a key role in supporting students requiring teaching and learning adjustments. Information presented during the Review consistently called for a strengthening and expansion of existing supports in and for schools.

Louden et al (2000) identified a lack of personnel in schools with specialist knowledge about the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. The recommendation that every school should have easy access to specialist knowledge or expertise relating to the provision of effective educational programs and strategies for students who require teaching and learning adjustments was echoed in this Review. Submissions and working party deliberations identified that this is of particular relevance for students with disabilities.

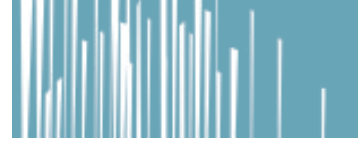
Findings of the Review highlighted the desire for all schools to:

- develop educational environments that engage all students in age-appropriate learning experiences;
- facilitate the development of effective teaching and assessment strategies for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments;
- implement interventions that reflect and expand on current Department strategies and aspects of the Curriculum Improvement Program, such as the Getting It Right: Literacy and Numeracy strategy and the Students At Educational Risk strategy;
- foster strong collaboration within and external to the school;
- promote effective inter-agency collaboration.

A team coordinator was identified during consultation and in working party deliberations as being central to building the capacity of the school. Whole-school coordination of the educational programs for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments was identified as a significant positive outcome.

Coordinators would be responsible for supporting colleagues to:

- document educational planning to support specific individual educational outcomes;
- individualise instructional strategies within the context of an inclusive learning environment and an inclusive curriculum;



- gather and analyse information so that teacher judgments about student performance can be justified and verified;
- use specialist teaching and/or communication techniques, supported by appropriate equipment and materials where necessary;
- develop innovative and appropriate assessment strategies so that students can effectively demonstrate learning;
- approach others for assistance in providing appropriate educational programs.

Coordinators would be responsible for the introduction, demonstration and implementation of pedagogy that has been developed for students with a particular disability, but which can also provide benefits to other students. An effective coordinator would establish strong collaborative links with district personnel, specialist services and local community services to assist ongoing curriculum development at the school level and the promotion of effective interagency collaboration.

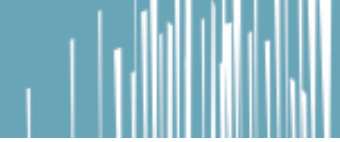
#### **Recommendation 4**

**The capacity of teachers to meet the needs of a diverse range of students is strengthened by developing pedagogy to support inclusive practice and the establishment of learning support teams.**

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#### **Effective professional learning**

Working party deliberations and research submitted to the Review called for educators to be provided with the understandings and skills they will need to meet their educational, ethical and legal obligations. This reinforced a key message in the report of the Senate Committee inquiry which suggested that teachers can feel ‘out of their depth’ when they are responsible for educating students who present significant challenges. Throughout the Review there was strong recognition of the need to provide ongoing professional learning opportunities to all teachers at their point-of-need. This has already been acknowledged by the Department, resulting in the development of comprehensive professional learning programs with literacy, numeracy and behaviour management as their foundation.



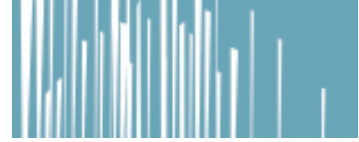
Providing formal recognition or accreditation of educators' professional learning was identified by working party members as enhancing outcomes for participants. Working parties and submissions strongly endorsed the need for standards, sustained over a period of time, to guide the development of well-structured professional learning programs and support materials. The Review acknowledges the work undertaken by the Department in conjunction with universities and the Technical and Further Education sector in recognising participation in selected professional learning programs and in providing accreditation or recognition of prior learning.

Quality professional learning is currently in place within districts and schools. Consultation during the Review and consideration of research including Mapping The Territory, suggests that successful professional learning programs share notable commonalities. These include:

- teacher input into planning and running of the programs to ensure that they focus on the real classroom needs of teachers;
- opportunities for reflection, shared practice and feedback;
- the ability for new strategies to be readily accommodated within the classroom;
- the effectiveness of evidence-based pedagogical strategies for students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

The action research cycle was identified throughout working party deliberations as a means of facilitating relevant and appropriate adult learning. Not only does it rely upon collaborative styles of problem solving that can provide timely and relevant support, but also acknowledges that self-reflection and experimentation can be most effective while individuals are actually involved in their work. Small teams who plan together, support one another and discuss their experiences openly, provide the framework around which such learning can be achieved (Jenkins 2002a).

Providing adequate and appropriate support to teachers in the adoption of pedagogy to meet the educational and social needs of a diverse range of students has been central to all Review discussions. It needs to be explicit in the ongoing planning for the Curriculum Improvement Program. This program supports a strong focus on pedagogy, professional learning and the provision of appropriate support materials. Explicit reference to inclusive educational

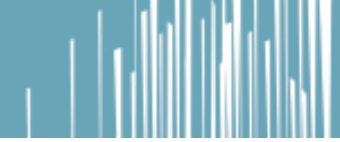


practice in the materials and professional learning programs developed by the Curriculum Directorate will facilitate long-term change and achievement of systemic outcomes.

The Building Inclusive Schools strategy also offers a structure for implementing the professional learning endorsed by this Review. All personnel in central office, districts and schools will be provided with the opportunity to raise their awareness of the expectations of society and the legal imperatives that form the context in which schools now operate. A focus on flexible and adaptable pedagogy runs through all stages of the strategy. It is most explicit in the final stage where specific needs of educators will be identified and addressed in order to further build the capacity and confidence of all teachers. Establishing a designated role in each school will be central to the successful implementation of the strategy. Local support for teachers will enable the provision of appropriate learning experiences for all students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.

Education support personnel, visiting teacher services and district-based personnel offer specialist knowledge upon which planning in professional learning can be founded. Comprehensive competency frameworks for teachers will further support the planning and development of relevant and effective professional learning programs. While classroom teachers can use the framework to reflect on their personal professional learning needs, professional development providers and tertiary institutions are able to use it to ensure that their services are relevant to the needs of Western Australian schools.

Working party deliberations determined that providing ready access to on-line materials enhances high quality professional learning for teachers and support personnel. The report of the *Inquiry into the Provision of Education in New South Wales 2002*, chaired by Professor Vinson, proposed the development of a web-based clearinghouse to provide local, interstate and international initiatives, best practice teaching and research databases. Findings from this Review endorse the development of a Western Australian equivalent that will provide evidence-based information.



The Department's Education to Community (e2c) strategy provides for an infrastructure that will be inclusive of all students and teachers and support optimal achievement of outcomes. It will promote sharing of knowledge and skills with access for all schools regardless of location. There was recognition that the needs of all teachers, particularly those teaching in rural and remote locations, would be met most effectively through the adoption of on-line options to supplement existing models of professional learning.

### **Recommendation 5**

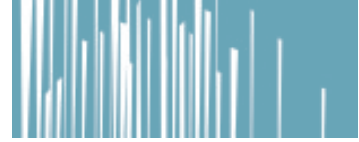
**An ongoing professional learning program is developed within the context of curriculum improvement and implemented to expand the capacity of all Department of Education and Training personnel to meet the needs of students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.**

### **Pre-service training to support better outcomes for students**

Universities in Western Australia have already made significant progress in ensuring that all undergraduate teachers acquire essential competencies related to students with diverse needs. The Senate Committee inquiry commended Western Australia and New South Wales for leading the way in terms of providing compulsory undergraduate education units that raise awareness regarding learning characteristics of a diverse range of students, including those with disabilities. This Review also acknowledges the existence of training and qualifications available to education assistants through universities and the Technical and Further Education sector.

The Review findings acknowledge that the tertiary sector is proactive in modifying existing programs of study to embed the principles of inclusive education and to equip graduates with the foundation knowledge, skills and understanding to meet the needs of diverse student groups, including students with disabilities. The opportunity for practical experience in working with students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments is seen as a powerful learning experience for all undergraduates.

Fletcher and Heath (2002) determined that pre-service knowledge of the



specific educational needs of students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments would provide a sound basis for further professional learning in the field.

### **Recommendation 6**

**The Department of Education and Training specifies its recommendations to pre-service institutions in the development of pedagogy to support inclusive practice.**


### **Technology to support learning**

Throughout the Review an integrated curriculum supported by access to information through the use of assistive technology, was recognised as a means to enhance learning for those students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments, and who may otherwise be excluded from genuine participation. The move towards the provision of on-line curriculum highlights the importance of creating inclusive accessible learning environments that support independent learning for all students. Expanding and providing equitable access to assistive technology for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments is a growing community expectation.

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The Department's commitment to making effective use of information and communication technologies, the Education to Community (e2c) strategy, has significant potential to support both teachers and students. It will increasingly enable teachers to use assistive technology, particularly that which is computer based, so that students can access the curriculum in an equitable manner. The Australian working definition of assistive technology as provided by Walker (2002) is accepted as any or all technology that provides assistance and/or support for people of varying abilities.

The nature of assistive technology can range significantly. 'Low technology' refers to devices that are inexpensive, simple to make and easy to obtain, for example, pencil grips and communication boards. 'High technology' includes devices that are expensive, more difficult to make and harder to obtain, for example, computer systems and software. 'Hard technology' refers to readily available components that can be assembled into assistive technology systems,



for example, mouth sticks and computers. 'Soft technology' refers to the human areas of decision making, training and concept formation and depends on knowledge rather than tangible objects.

The Review has identified inequities in the distribution of assistive technology to schools and the access provided for students. A focus on more integrated policies and the development of transparent and consistent processes for making decisions about the provision of assistive technology was suggested within submissions. It will be necessary to consider how to expand the assistive technology service to meet the needs of increasing numbers of students. The extent to which a student's access to the educational program is restricted will determine priorities for the provision of assistive technology.

Department action needs to support the development of:

- strong links and collaborative partnerships with the Information and Communication Technology Directorate to ensure the development of information and communication technology policies that include all students;
- a team to provide a specialist state-wide support service for schools and students with significant needs;
- district teams to distribute assistive technology for students whose learning needs may be ameliorated through the use of appropriate technology;
- effective professional learning opportunities for school and district personnel to facilitate more effective incorporation of technology into classroom practice.

The personnel working in education support schools and centres, districts, the Vision Impairment Service, the Western Australian Institute for Deaf Education and the Centre for Inclusive Schooling will continue to provide assistive technology services. Collaboration with all relevant government departments and professional service providers in the community will be essential to develop innovative ways of addressing the ongoing issues of limited financial and human resources, including technical supports and services.

### **Curriculum, assessment and reporting issues**

The selection, modification and development of appropriate pedagogy to respond to a student's individual learning characteristics were identified as being of paramount importance to the achievement of optimal learning outcomes.




The often increasing gap between the learning achievements of students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments and those achieving expected outcomes makes for complex educational planning and provision as students progress through the phases of schooling (Fletcher & Heath 2002, Westwood 1996). Given the Government's commitment to increasing the number of students who participate in post-compulsory schooling, the issues faced by students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments need further analysis to ensure successful transitions for these students from compulsory schooling to post-compulsory and post-school options.

The Overarching Learning Outcomes of the Curriculum Framework describe the outcomes that all students are expected to work towards. However, some students with disabilities do not conform to the typical progress that is implied by the Student Outcome Statements described in the Outcomes and Standards Framework. This presents challenges to teachers when acknowledging and documenting progress and achievement of learning outcomes for these students. Consultation during the Review and the findings of the Curriculum Improvement Program evaluation, highlighted a need to expand the support materials available for teachers making judgments about the achievements and progress of those students who learn in ways that are significantly different from their peers.

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Working party members identified a clear requirement for appropriate work samples to be developed to support the Outcomes and Standards Framework. Work samples need to make explicit relevant learning outcomes and include tasks that are appropriate for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments. Such material will provide teachers with information about levels of student achievement and support the process of moderating student work. The development of such materials was seen as being of considerable importance for teachers who do not work in specialist programs but who are teaching students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments.

In the transition to adopting educational need as the foundation for appropriate educational provision it is important that all teachers are in a position to make confident and accurate judgments about a student's achievement and ongoing educational needs. This will clarify the requirement for teaching and learning



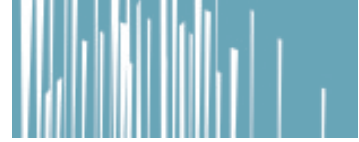
adjustments and the selection of appropriate teaching, learning and assessment strategies.

Teachers must always be able to provide accurate information regarding a student's learning program, progress being made and achievement. Parent submissions reflected that discrepancies currently exist between schools in terms of comprehensive reporting of student achievement. Throughout the Review parents and educators articulated the considerable challenges, and at times frustrations, faced when attempting to use standard school reporting formats to reflect the progress and achievement of students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments. Within the philosophy of inclusive education it follows that the outcomes and achievements of students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments must be acknowledged and included as part of the whole school approach to graduation and certification, just as it is for their non-disabled peers.

The findings of this Review and the implications of the Disability Standards for Education must be considered in the process of developing standardised and mandatory reporting requirements. It is essential that the *Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting* policy and procedures clarify the expectations and responsibilities that are relevant for students with disabilities in particular. Further refinement of materials, including progress maps, work samples and reporting formats, was strongly endorsed in all working parties. The content of these materials needs to be representative of students with disabilities engaged in relevant tasks that are consistent with their age and abilities.

### **Documenting educational planning and student progress**

The majority of schools have established processes for recording educational adjustments that support the achievement of academic and social outcomes for atypical learners. Often referred to as individual education plans, these provide a tool for planning and reporting on individuals, or groups of students, who require teaching and learning adjustments. Education plans can cover all or only some learning areas or targeted learning outcomes. Information and evidence presented to the Review highlighted the need for such plans to have a clear focus, purpose and emphasis on critical areas of educational need for the students concerned. Jenkins (2002a) highlighted the need to ensure that documenting individual education plans support teachers' classroom planning and educational provision.



Accountability for student progress and achievement will be strengthened when the Department sets mandatory requirements for documenting and reporting an individual student's educational needs, achievements and the teaching and learning adjustments that have been provided. There was agreement that the recording and reporting of information regarding educational provision for an individual or group of students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments needs to be explicit, efficient and streamlined. This was a common theme throughout the Review.

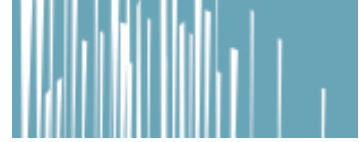
When documenting information regarding educational needs is combined with the requirement for and provision of teaching and learning adjustments, it can be used for a number of purposes. It can provide quality feedback for parents and determine the provision of resources to schools with links to school reporting and the Outcomes and Standards Framework. It was strongly endorsed during working party deliberations that provision of resources, services and supports to schools be based upon documented educational needs and plans for providing an appropriate educational program.

The Department will identify different requirements for documenting education plans dependent upon the nature and complexity of student needs. These plans will need to reflect what is, or has been, different for students in terms of providing an appropriate educational program and the assessment of the learning outcomes achieved. The plan can thus be constantly reviewed to ensure that learning experiences are directed at achieving collaboratively agreed learning outcomes.

### **Recommendation 7**

**Curriculum, assessment and reporting materials, strategies and policy are refined in order to ensure that all students are able to demonstrate the outcomes achieved across learning areas.**





# Chapter 4:

## Structuring Inclusive Schools

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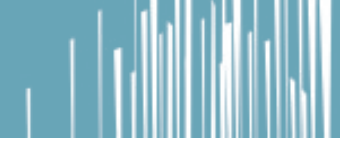
*One of the problems I face as a parent is that I don't know what services are available and I don't always fully understand what [my child] needs in a school environment. Also I don't know what [my child] is getting.*

(Individual submission)

The Robson Taskforce recommended changes to the operation of the government school system in Western Australia. It also made strong recommendations for change in key areas in order to address identified concerns regarding the provision of support services to schools. This Review has integrated the findings and recommendations of the Taskforce into working party deliberations and the formulation of recommendations. Many schools and districts already engage in inclusive practices and have developed inclusive educational programs, services and facilities. The challenge for the Department is to continue to expand the nature and provision of inclusive education across the state.

This chapter describes the structures and processes that will support the provision of quality inclusive educational programs, services and facilities for all students requiring teaching and learning adjustments. Providing a range of educational options for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments is considered in the context of inclusive schools.

Strong arguments have been articulated over the past fifty years for not segregating people who have disabilities from community activities. Significant developments have occurred in social institutions, such as education, as a response to these changed circumstances. The dynamic nature of education



will see changes continue in the design of educational programs, services and facilities. Processes need to be developed to ensure that educational programs, services and facilities are effectively coordinated, flexible and delivered according to student needs.

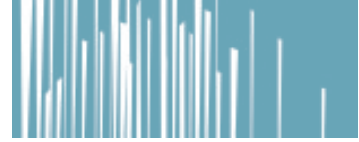
### **Inclusive educational programs, services and facilities**

The Department is committed to providing a range of specialist programs, facilities and services for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments. Contributions to the Review affirmed that parents and educators wanted and expected a range of educational programs, services and facilities to be provided. This would enable opportunities for a choice of educational environments to be available to parents. Parent contributions, in particular, indicated a desire to have the flexibility to transfer their children between schools and specialist programs at critical developmental points in accordance with their child's changing needs.

Inclusive educational programs and services that reflect local needs will enable all students to participate in appropriate educational programs within their local school community wherever possible. An inclusive campus consists of adjoining facilities with shared use of the physical environment. The Western Australian experience indicates that such sites facilitate opportunities for interaction between students and educators. This promotes authentic shared use of facilities and inclusive educational practices. Specialist facilities will continue to cater for those students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments whose parents select this as their place of enrolment. The features of such facilities are described in more detail later in this chapter.

### **Specialist programs and services**

There are already many schools offering educational programs reflecting inclusive practices and cultures. These programs share a fundamental premise that all students can be successful learners who make progress when appropriate teaching and learning programs are developed. The Department currently provides specialist programs and services to meet the needs of students with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, sensory or physical impairments, speech and language impairments, and severe emotional or behavioural disorders. Specialist educational programs and services are provided by personnel working in districts, by education support facilities



(including education support schools, education support centres, education support units and language development centres), and socio-psychological educational resource (SPER) centres, Hospital School Services and the School of Isolated and Distance Education. State-wide specialist services are provided through the Vision Impairment Service, the Western Australian Institute for Deaf Education and the Centre for Inclusive Schooling.

The challenge for the Department is to maintain the provision of effective specialist programs and services. Information and evidence gathered throughout the Review suggests that this responsiveness needs to be more consistent in schools and districts across the state. Concern was expressed about the fact that there are limits to the number of students who are able to participate in specialist programs with the demand exceeding the opportunities available. Although parents want genuine choice and the option of local school enrolment, they are also seeking confirmation that the educational program provided irrespective of setting, will be appropriate and responsive to their child's needs.

The dissemination of the expertise within specialist programs and services is an emerging trend in the Department. This has been supported by the development of outreach services, such as those from socio-psychological educational resource centres, language development centres and the Centre for Inclusive Schooling teams. These developments point the way to innovative planning and sharing of the expertise that already exists within the Department.

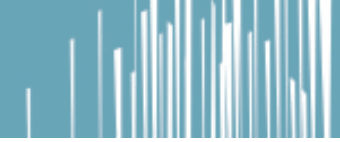
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Working party members endorsed the need for the Department to adopt explicit processes and structures to further expand utilisation of teacher expertise and skills beyond their immediate classroom or school. This would facilitate teachers working together to share responsibility for educational outcomes.

### **District structures**

The concept that structures established by districts will build on existing quality practice and provide quality services to schools was strongly supported by contributors to the Review. Working party deliberations identified the following priorities for districts:

- assisting schools in the development of appropriate and differentiated curriculum, assessment and program design;

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- identifying and profiling the needs of students and the relevant adjustments to the teaching and learning environment that are required;
  - verifying the educational needs of students and the requirement for teaching and learning adjustments;
  - managing and assuring the quality of resource provision to schools for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments;
  - supporting teachers in adapting pedagogy to meet the needs of all students;
  - supporting schools to address the behavioural and emotional needs of students;
  - providing specialist advice and support to educators and parents;
  - coordinating the professional learning of school-based learning support teams and their coordinators.

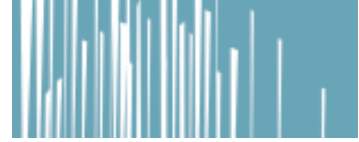
The development of multi-disciplinary teams within each district would develop service delivery models that are based on the principles of inclusive education. The establishment of multi-disciplinary teams is consistent with the findings of the Robson Taskforce. The Taskforce identified the need for provision of support to be located as close as possible to local schools.

### **Establishing collaborative learning areas in local schools**

Working party deliberations emphasised the role of the local school as the entry point to formal education for all students. Discussions centred on the incompatibility of the selective provision of education support units in designated schools and the principles of inclusive education. Programs currently offered in education support units should become available in every school and synonymous with collaborative learning areas. Such a model will enable professional skills to be shared more widely and students to be engaged in programs for varying amounts of time. Importantly, this does not conflict with the commitment to maintaining a range of specialist programs, services and facilities. It offers the opportunity for a refocus on pedagogy at the school level and flexibility in district decision making.

### **Establishing collaborative learning centres in districts**

In aligning existing language development centres, education support schools and education support centres with the principles of inclusive education, the Review has identified opportunities to share the pedagogical expertise that is currently concentrated within these programs and facilities with other schools.



The progressive development of these centres will be in response to local planning processes. They will offer specialist programs for those students who have the most intensive educational, physical or health care needs and a variety of enrolment opportunities. This could include the enrolment of pre-compulsory aged children for intensive early intervention programs, short-term enrolment to address speech and language or behavioural needs and the delivery of quality post-compulsory transition programs.

Collaborative learning centres reflect contemporary thinking that promotes the development of professional learning communities, which collaborate and share expertise. They will also provide opportunities for more effective collaboration between state-wide services, specialist centres and local schools at a locally based hub.

### **Recommendation 8**


**Services, programs and facilities, including specialist facilities for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments, are provided within the principles of inclusive education.**

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### **Designing inclusive schools and facilities**

Findings of the Review reinforced the need for the Department to adopt and make explicit, building and design standards to ensure that the development of educational facilities is consistent with the principles of inclusive education. There is an expectation that the physical environments of schools will be evaluated and if required, modified to meet contemporary building standards and community expectations. The progressive refurbishment or replacement of existing schools and the development of new inclusive campuses must take into account the specialist spaces and equipment required to meet the needs of students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments.

The Department acknowledges that indirect discrimination in terms of physical access must be addressed wherever possible. Physical access requirements should not be a barrier to equity of enrolment or educational opportunities (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 2003). The Department's



Disability Service Plan 1995 provided a framework for the relevant standards. It is still relevant but requires updating and integration into the capital works program. Given the Department's commitment to providing purpose-built facilities to meet the intensive educational, physical or health care needs of some students, these need to be considered as integral components of inclusive campuses. It is of critical importance to recognise that the requirements will vary in terms of the structures and spaces that are necessary to meet student needs.

The following priority actions were identified during the Review:

- analysis of demographic and district information to inform forward planning and anticipate population trends for students with disabilities in particular;
- allocating funds through the capital works program to ensure that building standards can be met;
- undertaking the specified review of the school design brief;
- developing guidelines for the School Planning and Infrastructure Committee to ensure that decision making is progressed.

The following section describes the features of inclusive educational facilities that are recommended as a foundation for planning. Some features apply to all school sites and will enable the Department to meet its obligations to provide access for people with disabilities, while other features apply only to purpose-built facilities.

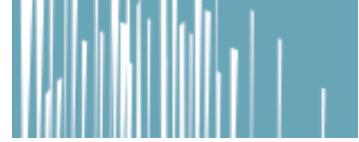
### **Inclusive school sites**

It is recommended that all schools will share the following universal design features:

- learning areas designed to link spaces visually, physically and in terms of function;
- dedicated spaces available for activities such as meetings, parent interviews and work with individual students;
- disabled toilets, ramps and other facilities provided to guarantee access and use by all students and members of the school community.

### **Inclusive campuses with specialist facilities**

An inclusive campus will have facilities that provide shared use of space and physical environment. It will facilitate the establishment of collaborative learning centres that will provide appropriate quality educational programs for students



with the most intensive needs.

An inclusive campus with purpose-built facilities will provide:

- access to a safe modified environment that enables ease of movement around the school;
- facilities and equipment to ensure that student needs can be met without compromising occupational health and safety;
- recreation and play areas designed and purpose-built to ensure that all students are able to participate in activities;
- appropriate spaces and equipment to develop students' independence and community living skills;
- opportunities for interaction with peers of the same age who may or may not have disabilities;
- shared administration and professional learning areas;
- additional spaces to provide intensive personal care, medical and/or therapy services, including sensory work, aquatic facilities and modified play equipment.


It is recommended that a position be established in the Facilities and Services Directorate to support the development of inclusive educational campuses. Liaison between Student Services and Facilities and Services Directorates, districts and schools will be important. This will result in the provision of accurate information regarding local, national and international standards and practices that will guide the development of inclusive campuses. It was strongly suggested during the Review that the Department work with other government departments in order to ensure strategic plans incorporate relevant demographic and community data.

### **Recommendation 9**

**Planning and design of schools will support inclusive practices through a staged capital works program.**

### **Developing a framework to evaluate programs and services**

The *School Accountability Framework* requires schools and districts to utilise student information to make judgments about progress and to set priorities for

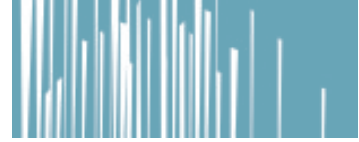


planning and delivering appropriate educational programs. In the same way, those responsible for providing specialist services or support to schools are required to evaluate the effectiveness of their actions in terms of the outcomes achieved. Educational leaders have initiated school and district educational programs in response to specific student needs. While there are clear and substantial benefits reported by parents, educators and students, these programs are not consistent across the state and few have been formally evaluated. Findings of the Review support the development of accountability frameworks to evaluate educational programs and district and state-wide specialist services.

Program evaluation within the Department would be strengthened through further development of rigorous accountability measures that can be adopted by school and district leaders and used to inform educational planning. Effective performance measures will incorporate a strong evidence base with a focus on pedagogy and organisational approaches. Quality measures will also enable demonstration that operations are consistent with the enabling conditions described in legislation and Departmental policy and procedures.

A framework for district and state-wide service evaluation would include the identification of present and future students requiring services, mapping of current services, including coordination of services, and the outcomes achieved. It is envisaged that the development and application of a service accountability framework will incorporate processes developed during the recent evaluation of services for students with speech and language impairments. The framework will need to focus on what the services are trying to achieve, what is the evidence for achievement and how services could be improved in the future. Establishing accountability frameworks will facilitate an examination of current national and international research and standards for service delivery to students.

It is proposed to systematically evaluate state-wide specialist services that include the Hospital Schools Service, Socio-Psychological Educational Resource Centres as well as Western Australian Institute for Deaf Education, Vision Impairment Service and the Centre for Inclusive Schooling. It will be important for services to demonstrate the quality of the programs they conduct and that they are properly coordinated. Ongoing evaluation will ensure that programs fit the overall strategic goals of the organisation and conform to



national and international benchmarks. Services may be realigned to meet these standards.

In order for all schools to be provided with support services that are responsive, flexible and focused on the changing needs of schools and students, district and state-wide services need to be reviewed on a regular basis. All services would thus be encouraged to engage in a continuous improvement process that would identify priorities and inform decisions regarding the provision of services and supports to schools and students.

### **Recommendation 10**

**A framework for ongoing review and evaluation is implemented to ensure coordinated and effective educational provision for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.**

#### **Supporting earliest intervention**

In line with providing quality service, the Review findings and research support the efficacy of early intervention as a critical strategy from K-12. Early identification and intervention, preferably prior to school entry, for students with disabilities has led to greater inclusivity in later years in local school settings (Gammage 2002). For many students with disabilities, the opportunity to participate in everyday experiences, to develop independence and communicative competence is highly dependent on effective early intervention programs and services. Strategies implemented as close as possible to the time that a specific need or risk factor is identified have the potential to reduce the incidence, severity or impacts of educational risk factors. The understanding of educators and school communities that early intervention is not synonymous with the early years of schooling must be strengthened (Zubrick et al 1995, Cotton & Jackson 1996).

Findings of the Review reinforced the critical importance of effective early intervention supported by committed educators, a strong evidence base and clearly shared responsibilities between parents and different departments or agencies. This notion is reflected in Fletcher and Heath's (2002) assertion that it will be essential for the Department to put into place a system for early identification that will be inclusive of all students.

They also identified that:

*many parents and professionals expressed concern that children [with neurological, cognitive or psychiatric conditions] were not identified nor their specific needs addressed soon enough, with the result that their learning difficulties were frequently compounded by a history of failure and low self-esteem.*

(Fletcher & Heath 2002: 27)

This statement reflects the call throughout the Review for the need to provide quality early intervention programs through a comprehensive, systemic and coordinated approach. In line with the Robson Taskforce findings, working party deliberations supported the necessity for strong links with other government departments, community service providers and tertiary institutions in supporting students and their families within local school communities. This collaborative network of support would be of particular relevance in supporting the development of early intervention programs for children up to 8 years of age.

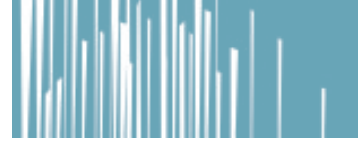
To support the development of effective early intervention the Department needs to consider as priorities, those groups of students that many contributors to the Review considered to be most vulnerable:

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- younger children with identified disabilities or impairments who would benefit from structured early intervention programs to strengthen their readiness for school;
- students from K-Year 2 whose pattern of learning and achievement is indicative of significant risk of long term learning failure unless fundamental learning skills are developed through targeted early intervention;
- indigenous students who may be at risk of being incorrectly diagnosed as having a disability as a consequence of their school performance or apparent difficulties with learning;
- students at risk of developing social, emotional or behavioural disorders, with recognition of the importance of this during adolescence;
- students who are disengaged or alienated from traditional school environments.

### **Recommendation 11**

**Educational provision and planning to meet the needs of a diverse range of students is informed by the practice of earliest possible intervention at all phases of schooling.**



## **Collaboration to improve outcomes**

Working party deliberations and submissions to the Review reinforced that enhancing the well-being and learning outcomes for children and young people is a shared responsibility with many partners. The pivotal responsibility that schools have in encouraging and valuing the role of parents and the development of interagency collaboration was emphasised. There is currently considerable whole of government and community agency activity in Western Australia. The focus is on coordination and collaboration across agencies and settings to provide children and young people with seamless services and supports. It is recognised that it is neither acceptable nor appropriate for any agency concerned with children and young people not to develop close links with other agencies, parents and school communities. Research indicates that the collaborative model of service delivery has demonstrated improved access to services and supports, particularly in the case of disadvantaged or isolated families (Eccles & Harold 1996, Gammage 2002, Pascal et al 2002, Bertram & Pascal 2002).

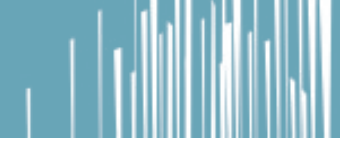
In providing a critical link between the school and other agencies, working party deliberations highlighted the role of the proposed learning support coordinator. Collaborative processes and agreements would thus become an integral part of every school's procedures and could be verified through the school quality assurance process. Coordinated approaches to intervention, which include protocols and memoranda of understanding, will support this approach.

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It was further suggested by working party members that on-line information be made available to inform educators, parents and other members of the community of services available. The exchange of relevant information and expertise to assist with the development of interventions that are timely, appropriate and sensitive to local school or family contexts would be facilitated.

## **Therapy services**

Issues to emerge from consultation, working party deliberations, school and district visits highlighted the need for better, more comprehensive therapy services to be available to schools. These services are highly valued by the community and do much to support the educational development of students requiring teaching and learning adjustments, particularly those with identified disabilities. The equitable provision of therapy services across the state to all



schools is a complex issue involving a number of service providers from government departments and private organisations.

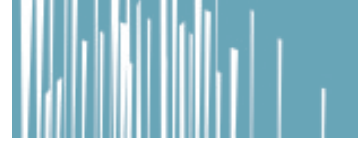
The Hon. Minister for Education identified the Review as an opportunity to re-evaluate therapy services. Since this time, the Department has undertaken a comprehensive review of the services provided to students with speech and language impairments. This work has culminated in the development of the Speech and Language Plan and a language outreach team based at the Centre for Inclusive Schooling. It is intended to continue the reviews of all therapy services, particularly those provided through specialist facilities and the services provided to local schools.

Feedback from schools in 2002 regarding therapy services highlighted the need for greater collaboration between parents, therapists and educators as a critical component of a successful state-wide model of service delivery. The Review acknowledges the significant collaboration currently being established between the Department and therapy service providers. This work paves the way for further interagency collaboration with parents, educators and therapists valued as partners in the delivery of seamless services. Findings of the Review identified the benefits to student outcomes when all parties work together to provide effective identification of student needs that can be addressed by the provision of therapy programs.

Considerable debate emerged during the Review regarding the extension of the Department's responsibility in terms of employment of therapists in schools and their role in providing services within schools. This issue will need to be addressed in future planning. It is envisaged that a framework for the negotiation of services with therapy providers will provide a process and foundation for future agreements.

### **Transport services**

The 1999 review of transport assistance for students presented issues to be considered in the development of efficient transport provision. These issues continued to be reflected in the contributions to the Review and point to the need for extensive communication and further development of shared understandings and responsibilities for transport provision.



The two main issues reported to the Review were the:

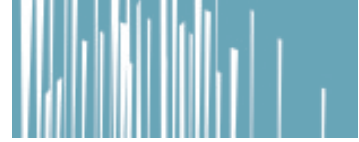
- demands of considerable travelling time that some children experience when accessing appropriate educational programs;
- need to develop transport services that support decision making based on a student's overall educational needs.

Liaison between the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and the Department of Education and Training has commenced. Proactive planning for transport services will facilitate decision making and efficient provision of services.

### **Recommendation 12**

**The Department of Education and Training develops a framework to guide and inform the negotiation of agreements with service providers in meeting the needs of a diverse range of students.**





# Chapter 5:

## Resourcing Inclusive Schools

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*No issue with the principles. The difficulty is always with the resourcing for the implementation.*

(Feedback response)

Resources mean not only what is available in the financial budget, but also the entire range of physical, human and social capital that is needed to achieve desired outcomes. In an educational context this encompasses the human, material, equipment and financial resources that are utilised to create productive learning environments. The task for educators is to transform financial resources into appropriate authentic educational supports for students.

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Attention should focus not only on the quantity of resources available, but also equally, on the nature and quality of the supports or services that arise from effective and efficient deployment of resources. There needs to be scrutiny of the processes for allocating funds to schools and the means by which schools can utilise these funds to support the teaching and learning needs of students and therefore make a difference to learning.

This chapter considers effective strategies for financial resource provision to schools in order to support students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments. It is proposed that the Department move to contemporary methods of assessing the level of support provided to schools. This will involve consideration of more effective strategies for resource provision that will meet the educational needs of all students who may require teaching and learning adjustments.



## **Determining resource provision according to educational needs**

Throughout the Review, there was concern about the inequitable provision of direct or targeted financial resources for students who have equivalent educational needs. Resources are not provided to schools unless students with identified disabilities meet current Department eligibility criteria (see Appendix 3). Under these arrangements not all identified students with disabilities are assured of direct or targeted supplementary resource provision.

Submissions to the Review and working party members cited inequities and inconsistencies in the provision of direct or targeted resources for students and the apparent failure to review basic resourcing arrangements as significant barriers to the achievement of genuinely inclusive schools. There were strong expressions of concern about students who have significant educational needs but for whom the provision of resources is restricted. The nature of students' disabilities or the schools they attend impact upon the provision of supplementary resources for required teaching and learning adjustments. Existing arrangements for the provision of resources to schools include a number of adjustments that are supplementary to the funds provided through school grants. These may include provision of additional teacher time, education assistants, specialist equipment and modifications to school environments.

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At an international level there is a recognisable increase in pressure for students to undergo an assessment or diagnostic process to determine their eligibility for access to direct or targeted resources, services and supports. This trend occurs particularly where there is a financial incentive to diagnose a disability. Having had the opportunity to observe the impacts of this trend in other educational jurisdictions, working party members urged the Department to move away from educational provision based on diagnosis towards provision based on educational needs.

The introduction of the K-12 Staffing Formula for all schools in 1997 established a number of factors to be taken into account when staffing a school. Adjusted teacher ratios have since been applied to identified groups of students. This results in variable student weightings with provision of additional teacher time to particular schools. For students with disabilities the school in which they are enrolled and the nature of their disability rather than the level of their educational needs generally determines adjusted teacher ratios and the provision of other resources.



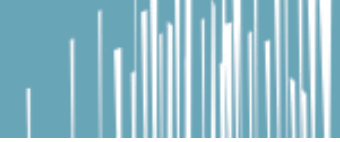
Working parties proposed the adoption of an educational needs assessment to provide a framework that allows parents, teachers and others working with students to agree on a student's level of educational needs. It would provide a current record of educational needs within a school context, indicating the level of need across a number of domains. It would facilitate transparent ethical decision making about the nature and intensity of teaching and learning adjustments required by the student and provide a basis for informed educational planning.

There are fundamental principles to be adopted in the transition to an educational needs approach to the allocation of financial and other resources for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments. Addressing each of the following considerations will ensure that the supplementary resources required to achieve optimal learning outcomes can be determined:

- one process for determining educational needs that can be used by all schools for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments;
- identification of the nature and intensity of teaching and learning adjustments required to support curriculum access, participation and achievement of learning outcomes;
- identification of what level of financial and other resources are required to provide the adjustments;
- determination at school level of how best to provide the teaching and learning adjustments.

Consultation with national and international educational leaders reinforced the directions that emerged in working party deliberations concerning links between the identification of educational needs and resource provision. There was clearly philosophical agreement with the development of allocative mechanisms for resource provision based on curriculum access needs. Educators require skills and expertise in identification and planning to address educational needs and achieve learning outcomes for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments. This enables educators to describe what additional measures are needed at the school. It would enable schools to allocate and use supplementary resources with greater effectiveness.

Resourcing the actual requirements of students within their learning environment empowers educators with the confidence to provide and be accountable for their provision of appropriate educational programs.



By establishing a clear link to funding, the commitment, abilities and efforts of educators are acknowledged. They are supported in ensuring equitable and flexible resource provision to all students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments irrespective of educational setting.

### **Recommendation 13**

**An educational needs model of resource allocation is adopted to ensure students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments have equitable and flexible access to resources.**

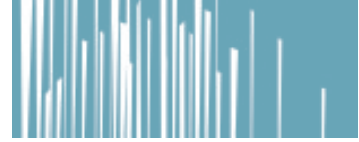
### **Local decision making, moderation and accountability**

The Review considered recent research and national developments in the area of resource allocation. The focus of this work has been on systems and sectors that have devised a number of ways to increase local decision making.

Developing ways to gather school information that informs a central or regional resource allocation process has also received attention. Research indicates that where there is local decision making about resource provision, the more likely it is that students' educational needs will be met flexibly, accurately and effectively (Mitchell et al 1994). Slee (cited in Cormack et al 1997: 135) states:

*When resources are 'out there' and not integral to the school, schools believe that they can continually expect more and may not necessarily take responsibility for ensuring that [the] resource they have 'grasped' (Slee 1996) is used effectively and in the best way to achieve educational outcomes.*

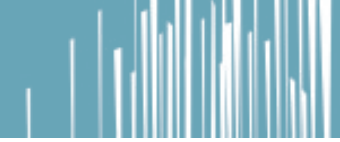
The existing Departmental process for allocation of direct or targeted resources to students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments is characterised by central decision making. The difficulties engendered in such an approach are becoming increasingly evident with the growth in numbers of students identified as having disabilities. Working party members linked this to the challenges of verifying information, judging the relative needs of schools and students and increasing pressures on the central office personnel who manage this process.



The centralised model promotes a dependency by schools on external financial resources that are seen as distinct from, and in addition to, school resources (Jenkins 2002b). This model diminishes the school's ability to make local decisions, and inhibits flexible and innovative support to students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments. The Robson Taskforce identified the need to encourage schools to place greater emphasis on linking financial resources with improved outcomes as a priority. McMullan (cited in Cormack & Winter 1997) suggests that there needs to be more attention paid to the difference that resource allocation makes to the school's educational program and the effectiveness of the outcomes achieved. In discussing the importance for schools to develop ways to determine the effectiveness of the use of additional funds, Ysseldyke et al (cited in Cormack et al 1997) stress the importance of negotiating and documenting educational plans that describe what learning outcomes are expected and what support students will need to achieve them. Such plans offer a means of accountability that will ultimately link to district decision making and resource provision. The development of standards for documented educational plans will ensure consistency of accountability and funding provision.

Consistency of decision making between districts and the adoption of quality processes are becoming increasingly important. A major issue in the transition to localised decision making is the development of effective accountability mechanisms to counter any real or perceived loss of control over expenditure. It is critical that financial resource allocations for significant teaching and learning adjustments be based on an assessment of educational needs that is accurate, reliable and verified locally. The devolution of the allocation of resources must be accompanied by explicit accountability standards for the distribution and utilisation of these resources, thereby ensuring that the integrity and appropriate use of resources can be demonstrated at all times.

Working party members identified the need to establish new positions in districts. The personnel in these positions would have specific responsibility for moderation and verification of the information used in the provision of resources for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments. This would enable a smooth transition to devolved district-based management. Prior to implementation across the Department a selective trial is advisable. A trial involving devolved moderation and resource allocation processes would



determine the impacts on schools and districts. Requirements for maintaining accountability and associated benefits or risks could then be identified and evaluated.

Aspects of a centralised system will need to be maintained in order to provide high cost and/or low incidence supports such as sophisticated assistive technology, major modifications to school sites or provision of specialist services in response to the needs of students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments.

### **Allocative frameworks to support local decision making**

Allocative frameworks aim to support a system of resource provision that:

- matches the level of student and school need;
- describes what resource provision can be anticipated;
- is transparent in how resource provision is derived;
- is managed as close as possible to the school context;
- promotes accountability for the use of resources and the outcomes achieved.

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The Review considered a number of allocative frameworks within Australia and internationally. The most promising frameworks are those that inform the decision makers in the system and provide timely feedback on resource allocation and distribution. These frameworks allow for the devolution of responsibility in the allocation of resources for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments while at the same time informing and in effect, regulating the flow of information across the whole school system. A framework for responding to the needs of all students would preferably be linked to a system framework for ensuring standards within schools in relation to resource allocation and practice.

The Criteria for Special Provision (CRISP) program, developed by Birmingham City Council's Special Educational Needs Division, offers a quality example of an allocative framework that matches a student's identified educational needs with supplementary resource provision. Allocative frameworks of this type were suggested within working party deliberations to assist the Department to determine the level of financial resources to be provided for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments. The work undertaken by the



Department to develop a generic resource allocation mechanism has the potential to provide significant advantages to schools.

Government funding provision that is linked to levels of educational need and the growth of the student population was deemed crucial to ensure resources keep pace with increasing demand.

### **System level management of information**

A data collection system capable of providing a comprehensive real time picture of the students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustment is considered essential. Awareness of students enrolled in all schools, the pattern of educational needs and the provision of teaching and learning adjustments are also essential. This was consistently identified in working party deliberations. An integrated electronic database could facilitate the provision of information within the Department by mapping and identifying each school's requirements and the characteristics of the student population. Such data would assist with planning, monitoring and reviewing the resources provided to educational facilities, services and programs. A challenge for the Department is to accurately track student movement to ensure timely provision of resources, services or supports as students transfer between schools.

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Consultation during the Review with the educational jurisdictions of New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland regarding development and use of integrated electronic data management provided insight into models to serve as a foundation for Western Australia. Development of an information management system would provide an opportunity for schools, districts and central directorates to ensure that the data collected is relevant and comprehensive. It would facilitate compliance with reporting and accountability requirements as they exist now, and more importantly, as they develop into the future. This has implications for the Department as it complies with Commonwealth reporting requirements and demonstrates eligibility for financial resources to support program implementation.

Working party deliberations strongly endorsed the establishment of a single database to record the details and educational needs profile of students who require significant teaching and learning adjustments in all schools.



The database will:

- provide reciprocal information between schools and all levels of the Department;
- identify the teaching and learning adjustments provided;
- identify the level of resourcing that has been approved;
- track students and facilitate the transfer of educational information and resources.

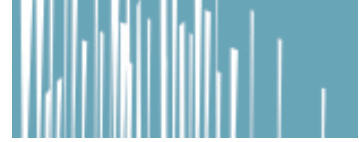
### **Supporting inclusive schools and developing flexibilities at school level**

Recent work within the Department flowing from the recommendations of the Robson Taskforce has focused on developing a process whereby schools can incorporate school grant funding and allocated human resources to provide flexibility within the school. This presents a number of advantages to schools in the management and provision of financial resources to respond to the specific needs of the student cohort. It is particularly relevant for those students requiring teaching and learning adjustments. Effective allocative frameworks are responsive to the educational needs of all students and meet standards in relation to resource allocation and inclusive educational practice.

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Inclusive schools allocate resources in order to promote and support activities that increase the capacity of the school to respond to student diversity. The ability of schools to convert resources to effectively meet student needs is seen as crucial to developing inclusive schools. Flexibilities introduced at local level allow for appropriate consultation as to what type of support is most appropriate to meet a student's needs. Educational research (Giangreco 1997, Jenkins 2002b, Giorcelli 2002) has articulated the need to break down reliance on one form of resource provision and encourage the adoption of multiple supports to more actively develop the independence of students and achievement of optimal learning outcomes. It is envisaged that schools will be in a position to consider an array of resources suitable to meet local needs and have the financial flexibility to adopt the most appropriate.

School leaders have identified a lack of flexibility and an inability to convert resources from one form to another as more significant issues than the lack of financial resource allocations. As Jenkins (2002b) suggests resources for students with disabilities are often seen as different from resources for the general school community. A balance should exist between schools being resourced



entirely on the basis of individual student support as opposed to resourcing the school as a whole. Cormack et al (1997) have also acknowledged that progress towards equitable resource provision requires flexible processes for funding all students in schools, not only those who require significant teaching and learning adjustments.

#### **Recommendation 14**


**Moderation, review and decision making regarding resource allocation for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments is carried out as close as possible to schools.**

#### **Supporting all students requiring teaching and learning adjustments**

Many submissions to the Review demanded that better provision be made for those students who are not eligible to access direct or targeted financial resources. Submission makers described inconsistencies in the provision of financial resources. Working party deliberations identified the need for the Department to make a renewed commitment to exploring funding arrangements for all students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.

Differential support to schools that is based upon the educational characteristics of the total student population needs to be developed. The Robson Taskforce acknowledged this as an issue and cited as an example the use of the Ross H index to allocate Commonwealth funding for literacy and numeracy programs. As a consequence of this index some schools do not receive additional financial resources that are in proportion to the difficulties being experienced by students despite accessing several overlapping funding programs.

Working parties stressed the need for resourcing options to be developed to work in conjunction with any funding provision for direct or targeted supplementary resources for those students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments. This approach does not imply developing individual direct or targeted funding for a larger number of students. Funding provision for direct or targeted supplementary resources must continue to meet only the



needs of those students identified as requiring, and being eligible for, such resources and should not be further dissipated.

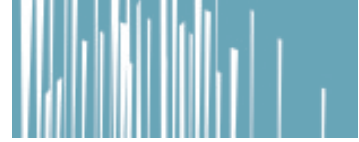
A complementary program of funding and resource provision does suggest supporting schools to provide appropriate education programs for identified groups of students. This may include support for particular approaches to teaching and learning or differentiated educational opportunities for a group of students. In some circumstances the teaching and learning adjustments adopted by schools may prove to be effective over relatively short periods of time. Without complementary programs of funding, over time it will be impossible to contain the demand from an increasing number of students supported within an individual funding model (Meyer 2001, Vinson 2002).

In order to anticipate the contexts within which schools operate it will be essential to understand differing needs of schools in providing for the needs of all students who require teaching and learning adjustments. Key aspects of the research and consultations conducted by Education Queensland included social economic and demographics analysis as a foundation for future educational planning. Allan Luke's assertion presented to the Education Queensland on-line conference (20.10.1999) is of as much relevance to Western Australia as it is to Queensland:

*we can't begin to decide what to do educationally, or how to plan, or where to put resources and programs unless we know something about the students we're teaching and the communities we work in.*

Identifying potential changes within the community will make a significant contribution to forward planning for educational programs, structures and resource distribution. The target is to continue to improve processes for resourcing every school to facilitate provision of appropriate support for all students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.

It is proposed that the Department undertake further analysis of the State and Commonwealth funding arrangements currently in place to support all students requiring teaching and learning adjustments. This would enable evaluation of the effectiveness of resource distribution against the stated outcomes of each program. This is essential if schools are to have meaningful opportunities to



provide effective intervention and implement appropriate educational programs in response to student needs.

Investigation of options to enable the Department to provide financial resources for all students requiring teaching and learning adjustments will need to encompass:

- the extension of educational needs profiling to develop a whole school profile rather than just individual student profiles;
- the use of aggregated student or school-based data to determine needs;
- school-based infrastructure, for example establishing a learning support team in every school;
- appropriate levels of financial resources so that each school is able to consider how best to achieve student outcomes with anticipated resources;
- implementation strategies to trial various models of support.

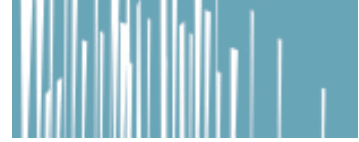
When schools adopt an inclusive approach underpinned by a re-conceptualisation of resource allocation to support the capacity of the school as a whole, then it is proposed that inclusive education is more likely to become sustainable. The whole school community is more likely to develop a social climate of acceptance towards diversity in its student body. This in turn will lead to more imaginative problem solving, with *people* more often than *money* as the solution to problems (Jenkins, 2002b).

Working party deliberations focused on the need to provide financial resources to support schools more directly and effectively. Global budgeting, as the means by which a school independently manages its allocation of funds, is frequently presented as offering the most promise for developing programs, services and supports for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments. Evidence gathered during the Review concurred with the Robson Taskforce finding that the amalgamation of program funding that target specific students or outcomes would assist schools in ensuring that sufficient funds are received for their programs.

### **Recommendation 15**

**Current arrangements are examined and more effective strategies for the provision of financial resources to schools are developed.**





# Chapter 6:

## Supporting Inclusive Schools

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*Appreciation of the complexity of inclusion leads to a focus on understanding the policies and practices that may either promote or diminish the effectiveness of inclusive processes in schools.*

(Jenkins 2002a: 69)


Commonwealth and State legislation relating to the delivery of schooling and disability discrimination provide the framework for the development of appropriate educational provision for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments. The challenge for the Department is to integrate the required actions identified within legislation and the strategic development of processes, strategies and policies to support inclusive education. Building the capacity of all schools to be proactive and responsive to the needs of students, particularly those requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments, and to their parents, requires development and implementation of consistent policies and procedures.

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This chapter considers the implications for the Department as the enabling intent of relevant legislation is put into practice, and identifies the significant policy matters that emerged during the Review. Actions to support the implementation of the recommendations made in this context are also identified.

### **Quality information, shared understanding and improved outcomes**

Genuine partnerships are built upon the availability of quality and accessible information for all. The need for genuine partnerships, respect and collaboration between educators and parents was a consistent theme in submissions, feedback and working party deliberations. In the analysis of feedback regarding the acceptance of the principles and indicators Crosby (2002) reported that some respondents stated that true partnerships could only



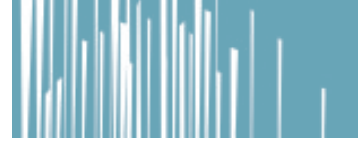
happen if unbiased, complete information was available to them. This requirement applies equally to all those involved in educational decision making: administrators, teachers, parents, students and at times, the wider school community. Effective partnerships will enable parents and educators to make informed decisions and identify the nature of services and supports needed to assist in the provision of an appropriate educational program. This encompasses curriculum delivery, management strategies, reporting progress and achievement as well as the supports and enrolment options available.

Parents need to be empowered to actively contribute by being given easily understood information that is an accurate reflection of their child's unique educational characteristics and the school context. Information provided by parents needs to be built into decision making and to be evident in documented education plans. Educators need a comprehensive understanding of the school context and Department policies, procedures and obligations.

Throughout the Review there have been indications from parents, educators and service providers that legitimising the provision of assistance to parents that is independent of the school has value. This would provide support for parents as they communicate their interests and perspectives to school personnel. This role is already acknowledged as a legitimate task undertaken by some Department personnel, particularly those working in districts or as specialist service providers. Making this explicit in the job description for relevant positions and communicating this change to educators and the wider community would reinforce the role as a critical component in the provision of quality information to inform decision making.

### **Recommendation 16**

**Quality information is provided to school communities to facilitate effective decision making to improve outcomes for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.**



## State and Commonwealth legislation as drivers of change

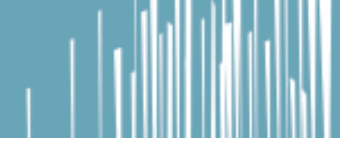
It is essential that the Department continue to integrate legislative imperatives into the process of revision and modification of policies and procedures that commenced with the introduction of the *School Education Act 1999*. This process, along with an increased understanding of the enabling intent of legislation by all those involved in schools and educational decision making, was identified as a means to diminish the incidence of discrimination.

Relevant legislation provides the framework that enables an inclusive approach to education. The *School Education Act 1999*, the *Curriculum Council Act 1997*, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, the *Human Rights Act 1994* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* constitute the major elements in the Western Australian education context. Formulated under Section 31 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, the Disability Standards for Education set explicit parameters regarding decision making and the provision of education for students with disabilities. The Standards articulate the right to comparable access, services and facilities, and the right to participate in education and training unimpeded by discrimination, including stereotyped beliefs about the abilities and choices of students with disabilities.

83

Submissions to the Review and members of working parties articulated concerns that Department policies and procedures do not at this stage fully reflect the intent of all relevant legislation. Establishing an expert consultative group with appropriate community representation, would enable the Department to:

- identify inconsistencies between State and Commonwealth legislation and provide advice to resolve these matters;
- identify necessary actions to be taken by the Department to ensure policies and procedures comply with relevant legislation;
- develop materials to provide all parties with accessible information that makes explicit the legislated rights, responsibilities and protections for all members of the school community;
- identify a range of strategies to ensure all personnel are fully aware of their legal responsibilities and obligations to behave in a manner that is not discriminatory;
- recommend modifications necessary to State legislation related to educational provision for students with disabilities.



The Department is obliged as an education provider to undertake consideration of the implications of the Disability Standards for Education in terms of the delivery of education for students with disabilities. This undertaking can become an integral part of the action arising from this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 17**

**The *School Education Act 1999* and *Regulations 2000* are reviewed to ensure consistency with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.**

### **Reviewing current Department policies and procedures**

*All decisions concerning enrolment must involve discussions with parents/caregivers so that collaboration about enrolments and the provision of educational services may be open and transparent and reflect the process identified in the enrolment policy.*

(Lindsay & Keefe-Martin 2002: 30)

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Findings of the Review suggest that while this is an important starting point, in order to achieve the best possible learning outcomes and learning environments it will be essential to go beyond the policies and procedures that concern enrolment. A proactive and considered approach to developing policies, procedures and plans that reflect community aspirations and the enabling intent of legislation is necessary. In these circumstances real consistency can be developed between the intent of legislation and the actions taken to support the education of all students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments.

Working party deliberations identified a number of issues to be addressed by the Department as matters of urgency. They include:

- ensuring that equitable opportunities for enrolment are available for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments with decisions based upon the local educational context, the needs of the student and the same criteria that apply to all other students;
- ensuring all personnel are fully aware of their legal responsibility to adopt non-discriminatory behaviour in keeping with the spirit and intent of the relevant legislation;



- providing all parties involved in making educational decisions with accessible information that makes explicit the legislated rights, responsibilities and protections for all members of the school community;
- providing equitable and reasonable adjustments to the educational environment to support student participation in appropriate teaching and learning experiences;
- adopting approaches to the resolution of complaints and disputes that are consistent with those described in relevant legislation.

### **Equitable opportunities for enrolment**

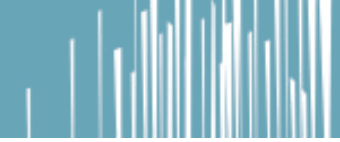
The opportunity to enrol children in the school attended by their siblings and peers reflects a strongly held desire of many parents. Many parents, community advocacy groups and educators cited discrepancies between legislation and current policy as contributing to difficulties regarding enrolment and access to appropriate educational programs, services and supports. This was consistently evident in submissions, working party deliberations, consultations with Disability Services Commission and at the public forums attended during the Review.

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The current Department policy and procedures for the management of enrolment are inconsistent across differing groups of students with disabilities, and reflect historical practices. The educational options available for some groups of students depend on the delivery of resources, including staffing, buildings and funding grants. It is critical that the criteria for determining enrolment become the same for all students and independent of the allocation of resources.

A comprehensive revision of the enrolment policy and procedures is necessary to address many of the issues that emerge when a student's participation in schooling and access to teaching and learning adjustments is discussed by parents and educators. Identified issues include:

- management of an application for enrolment and gathering information to ensure that informed judgments can be made to support the provision of necessary teaching and learning adjustments;
- comprehensive communication and support materials being provided to educators, parents and other professionals that assist the development of collaboration and shared decision making;

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- enrolment opportunities for students that are equitable across the State and which ensure that legislated rights and responsibilities can be met, an immediate priority is to consider this matter in terms of intellectual disability;
  - identification, and where needed, development of specialist programs or facilities to address the needs of particular groups of students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments;
  - establishing processes for managing concerns or complaints raised by parents, educators or other relevant members of school communities which support conciliation and resolution at local levels whenever possible.

### **Accountability for school improvement and student outcomes**

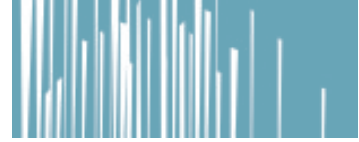
An effective education system engages in careful examination of its culture, educational practices and student achievements in order to strengthen the inclusive nature of the system. Reporting and accountability expectations and procedures will need further clarification as educational programs that are responsive to the identified needs of students are implemented. This reflects the Department's responsibility to take action in response to educational needs as well as to promote understanding, tolerance and acceptance of all students.

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The challenge is to further refine the existing accountability and school improvement processes to obtain the accurate, objective information necessary to improve engagement, participation and achievement for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments. Increasingly rigorous accountability measures have been adopted to improve educational provision for all students and enhance the achievement of optimal learning outcomes. As the Department continues this development and sets targets for the achievement of standards for students at different ages, the implications for students requiring significant teaching and learning adjustments will require careful consideration. Parents and educators working with these students have a mutual interest in and commitment to improving educational provision because of the benefits that emerge.

### **Behaviour management in schools**

The *School Education Act 1999* and *Regulations 2000* provide the parameters for managing student behaviour. Schools and school communities are seeking further development of the *Behaviour Management In Schools* policy and procedures to ensure that there is explicit acknowledgement of the behavioural



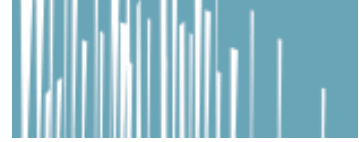
needs that may be associated with some disabilities. This matter received considerable attention during working party discussions and confirmed the feedback provided during implementation of the policy in 2001.

Within the *School Education Act 1999* and *Regulations 2000* there are areas of ambiguity in terms of responding to serious breaches of discipline that can lead to a recommendation for an exclusion order when a student has a disability. Clarification in this area is necessary to ensure that the process of responding to such a recommendation is based on accurate understandings of the issues concerned and is framed within the philosophy and intent of relevant legislation. Consideration of relevant legislation and materials developed by other authorities will enable the Department to implement quality practices and processes.

### **Recommendation 18**

**All policies and procedures of the Department of Education and Training are reviewed to ensure compliance with legislation and the incorporation of the principles of inclusive education.**





# Chapter 7:

## Sustaining Inclusive Schools

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*The most important principle is that we should tailor the support provided to the needs of the student. There are few who would not agree with this. However, the educational superstructure, the framework, is really not in place to allow this to happen.*

(External submission)

A major focus of the Review has been the identification of targets and strategies for continued improvement in the provision of quality education for all students requiring teaching and learning adjustments. The Review provided an opportunity to confirm what is working well and identified areas of change to current practice. Throughout the Review many contributors identified the need to establish rigorous processes to ensure not only that recommendations are implemented, but also that the effectiveness of implementation is evaluated.

The Robson Taskforce identified a need for forward-looking approaches and unifying strategies within the Department. It called for future strategic planning for the Department to focus on the allocation of resources and establishment of initiatives or programs to secure the achievement of clearly articulated outcomes that are inclusive of all students. The call for rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations has been validated throughout this Review. It is important given the implications that the Review recommendations have for strategic and budgetary planning.

As feedback provided to the Review demonstrated, there is an acceptance that comprehensive change will take time (Crosby 2002). The goal expressed by many respondents and working party members was for incremental implementation in order to achieve long-term sustainable change. The change process will be scrutinised closely by all interested parties. An ongoing

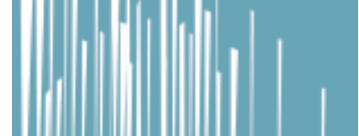


commitment by the Department to an investment in the stock of human and social capital within school communities will be critical to the success of this change process.

The plans for government school education focus on critical performance areas to provide information in terms of systemic achievement. The development of appropriate tools and strategies to be used by schools, districts and central directorates to collect information will enable the Department to monitor success against the stated purpose as identified in the plan. The ability to make evidence-based judgments regarding the achievement of an inclusive education system and the performance of all students, including those with disabilities, requires more sophisticated measures than those currently used in the annual reporting cycle. Contributors to the Review endorsed the development of appropriate performance measures and tools to assist the compilation of quality information to inform all planning.

The ability to make judgments about educational progress of students requiring teaching and learning adjustments, and the nature of the learning environments in which achievement can be demonstrated, will become increasingly important at a systemic level. Information measures concerning the effectiveness of resource use, as well as school and student performance, must reflect strong commitment to teaching and learning. Any restructuring of policy and processes need to focus on setting enabling conditions to support teachers' work (Luke 1999). This emphasis will ensure that schools are supported in refocussing educational programs to address the needs of all students without disadvantage to any particular groups or individual students.

Developing an inclusive education system requires that changes in the education environment are anticipated in order to facilitate rapid and flexible responses to student, school and community needs. Ongoing improvement in the equitable provision of appropriate resources and services to support effective classroom programs for all students requiring teaching and learning adjustments was a desire expressed by many parents and educators during the Review. Contributors to the Review have also sought an assurance that the unique needs and interests of students with disabilities will be recognised and protected by the Department.



The establishment of a Department taskforce with appropriate expertise has strong potential to support a systematic approach to the implementation of changes throughout the 2003-2007 planning cycle. This will facilitate the achievement of inclusive educational practice. Adopting such an approach will produce efficient and effective change characterised by strong collaboration and sharing of responsibilities between relevant sectors of the Department. As Mitroff (1998) suggests, achieving sustainable change of this magnitude requires that the broader system within which the change will take place be carefully examined in order to prevent fragmentation and isolation of activities.

In order to ensure the development of an inclusive education system it is recommended that a taskforce be established with specific responsibility to:

- identify the scope and impact of the Review recommendations;
- prioritise the work required to support the implementation of the recommendations;
- authorise tasks to be undertaken to support the development of an inclusive education system;
- oversee the implementation of identified strategies, processes and tasks;
- make an active contribution to the Department's decision making and strategic planning, with particular reference to addressing the needs of students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.

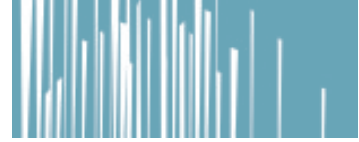
### **Recommendation 19**

**A process is developed to monitor and evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the recommendations of this Review.**

### **Recommendation 20**

**A taskforce is established to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of this Review.**





# Appendix 1:

## Conduct of the Review

---

The Review was called to examine the current provision of educational services and supports for students with disabilities and to identify the principles of effective and most promising practice to enhance the delivery of supports for these students. The Review was managed by the Student Services Directorate.

There were two stages to the Review and both have been acknowledged as being broad based and comprehensive consultative processes. The Review was supported by independent research and information analysis.

During Stage 1 it was recommended that the educational needs of students with disabilities be considered in the context of other students with special educational needs.

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### **Stage 1: April 2001 - December 2001**

Public submissions were invited from key stakeholders. Over 250 submissions were received from:

- individual parents, educators and community members;
- community advocacy or disability support organizations, government departments and professional associations;
- schools, districts and central directorates from the Department of Education.

Analysis of information gathered resulted in the development of major recommendations and the seven principles of inclusive education. The principles describe the characteristics of an education system that would deliver quality programs, services and supports for students with disabilities and other students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.

Findings and recommendations were published in the *Discussion Paper* (2002) and used as a foundation for further consultation and feedback. Analysis of feedback is presented in Appendix 5.

## **Stage 2: January 2002 - December 2002**

Over 300 nominations were received for participation in working parties from schools, parents, professional organisations, community groups, other agencies, government departments, Department of Education central directorates and district offices. Seven working parties involved up to 146 members. Each working party was chaired by a senior officer of the Department.

The task of each working party was to:

- investigate the implications of one of the principles of inclusive education;
- formulate specific recommendations to inform future educational planning.

The working party recommendations have been incorporated into the recommendations presented in this report. Working party tasks and membership are included in Appendix 4.

## **School community consultation, forums and communication strategies**

- Forum for post-compulsory aged students with disabilities
- Community forums or agency meetings
- Meetings with professional associations and conference presentations
- Contribution to publications

## **Independent research contributed to the Review**

- Crosby, I. & Harris, F. PDT Consultancy, Perth, 2001

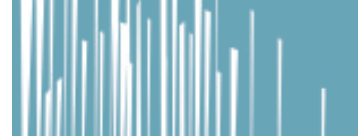
Identified perceptions regarding the current provision of educational supports for students with intellectual, physical and sensory disabilities. Identified principles to guide the development of models of educational provision for these students.

- Fletcher, J. & Heath, S. Child Study Centre, University of Western Australia, Perth, 2002

Examined services provided to those students who fail to learn or make progress at the same rate as their peers despite age-appropriate instruction, adequate learning capacity and socio-cultural opportunities.

- Jenkins, H. Curtin University of Technology, Perth, 2002

Identified features of quality evidence-based instructional strategies for the inclusive education of students with special educational needs.



## Professional consultation with the Review team

Mel Ainscow	Research and Graduate Dean, University of Manchester, United Kingdom
Paul Barker	Leeds City Council Local Education Authority, United Kingdom
Peter Farrell	Professor of Special Education, University of Manchester, United Kingdom
Chris Forlin	Associate Professor, Special Education, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia
Loretta Giorcelli	Honorary Fellow, University of Western Sydney, Visiting Professor San Francisco State University
Len Haines	University of Saskatchewan, Canada
S.M. Naicker	Director Inclusive Education, Department of Education, South Africa
Merlin Rengel	Assistant Manager, The CRISP Office, Birmingham Education Service, United Kingdom
Roger Slee	Assistant Director General, Education Queensland
Brian Smyth-King	Director Disabilities Programs, Department of Education and Training, New South Wales
Rosemary Tannock	Brain and Behaviour Research Programme, Toronto, Canada
Ragnar Thygesen	Professor of Special Education, Norwegian University of Science and Technology





# Appendix 2:

## Principles and Indicators that Describe Inclusive Education

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### **PRINCIPLE 1 All students have the right to enrol, access and participate in schooling that meets their individual needs**

Indicators:

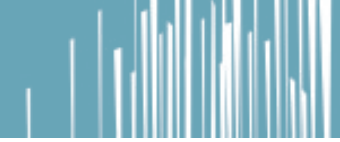
- the right of students with disabilities to be enrolled, access and participate in schooling on the same basis as other students is recognised and practised;
- parents are partners in all aspects of the education process;
- information about schooling options and the range of services is comprehensive and accessible to allow for informed parental choice;
- enrolment procedures are collaborative, transparent and consistently applied;
- effective transitions are made during all phases of schooling;
- students with disabilities participate in an appropriate range of learning environments and achieve the learning outcomes described in the Curriculum Framework.

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### **PRINCIPLE 2 All levels of the system value diversity and operate within an inclusive framework**

Indicators:

- school communities value diversity;
- educators have the awareness and confidence to support students who require teaching and learning adjustments;
- educational leaders take a proactive role in advocating and ensuring equity for all students;
- schools develop and adopt inclusive pedagogical and cultural practices.



**PRINCIPLE 3 A range of effective and appropriate adjustments is provided to ensure access, participation and achievement**

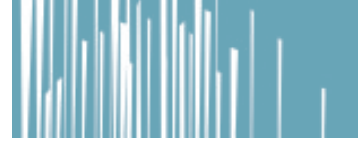
Indicators:

- adjustments are informed through collaboration with parents and other relevant stakeholders;
- students' views are sought and are reflected in the educational program;
- adjustments are made at the whole school, classroom and individual levels and are regularly monitored and reviewed;
- decisions about adjustments are made, where possible, at the local level;
- adjustments are culturally sensitive and minimise discrimination;
- adjustments are recorded within a documented educational program as part of a broader accountability framework.

**PRINCIPLE 4 Adjustments are provided on a needs basis and are equitably resourced**

Indicators:

- a consistent and coordinated system-wide procedure for the identification of students who require teaching and learning adjustments is in place;
- all stakeholders contribute to the identification and assessment of students' learning needs;
- an allocative mechanism based on educational need provides resourcing for appropriate adjustments;
- schools are supported to be flexible in planning and implementing appropriate programs for students who require teaching and learning adjustments;
- schools demonstrate accountability in the use of allocated resources.



## **PRINCIPLE 5 The system supports the development of pedagogy to meet individual student needs**

Indicators:

- evidence-based, effective models of teaching and learning for all students with disabilities are identified, promoted and implemented;
- benchmarks for effective teaching and learning practices are identified, promoted and implemented throughout the system;
- implementation and ongoing evaluation of effective teaching and learning practices are supported by the system;
- partnerships with training providers are formed to ensure best quality pre-service and in-service training.

## **PRINCIPLE 6 The range of coordinated services provided is flexible and delivered according to student needs**

Indicators:

- individual student needs are identified and responded to through a range of co-ordinated services and supports;
- support services respond to local school community contexts;
- school-based interventions are implemented as early as possible;
- services and supports are reviewed regularly to acknowledge changing school community and student needs;
- system initiatives are monitored and reviewed.

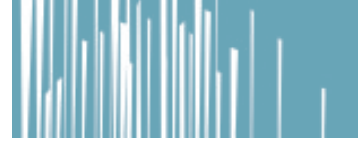
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## **PRINCIPLE 7 Services are provided and supported by collaborative models and partnerships**

Indicators:

- service providers and educators work together to create seamless service delivery to students;
- schools engage in collaborative models to ensure effective responses to student needs;
- collaborative partnerships define responsibilities and expectations that are monitored and reviewed;
- protocols between service providers and the Department are ratified at the system level.





# Appendix 3: Current Operational Descriptions of Disabilities

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These are the current descriptions of disability and criteria used to establish a student's eligibility for specialist programs, services or provision of supplementary resources within a school context. It is not a comprehensive presentation of all conditions but identifies the significant student groups to whom the Department provides support. Operational descriptions for disabling conditions encompassed by the *School Education Act 1999* and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* will be further developed in the context of the national work regarding definitions of disability and the Department's development of educational needs assessment strategies.

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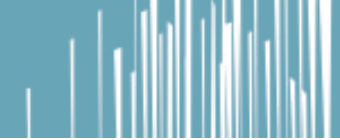
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Autism Spectrum Disorders	The DSM-IV criteria for Autism, Aspergers Syndrome or Pervasive Developmental Disorder: Not Otherwise Specified must be met. An assessment by a paediatrician, psychologist and speech pathologist recognised by the Disability Services Commission is required.
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Communication, speech or language impairments	Communication, speech, expressive and/or receptive language abilities are significantly impaired. The severity of the communication impairments cannot be accounted for by hearing impairment, cognitive development, social, emotional or cultural factors.
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Deaf or Hard of Hearing Evidence of a hearing loss that impacts on learning. Eligibility for access to support is based on comprehensive assessments conducted by the personnel at the Western Australian Institute for Deaf Education.

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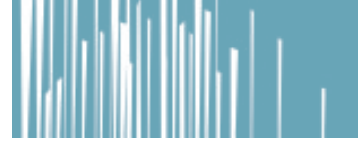
Emotional or behavioural disorders Student displays behaviours where special support in the context of the school is required to allow them to participate and access the curriculum. A clinical diagnosis is required from a psychiatrist.

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Intellectual disability Clear evidence of a global disability with reduced levels of performance in academic and social domains is required. Standardised assessments of intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour are necessary. Assessment results must be 2 standard deviations or more below the mean, taking into account the standard error of measurement that will vary according to the age of the student and the assessment tool used.

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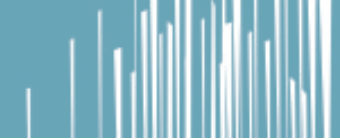
Physical impairments A physical condition involving the motor system that significantly limits the student's level of functioning and independence in mobility, personal care or ability to undertake learning tasks. Eligibility is confirmed through medical reports, parent and school observations.



## Vision impairments

It is considered that a student with a visual acuity of 6/18 or less in the better eye, after appropriate correction, requires teaching and learning adjustments. Visual field restrictions and degenerative visual conditions are also considered. Eligibility is confirmed through specialist reports, parent and teacher observations.

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# Appendix 4: Working Party Tasks and Membership

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**Working Party One** formulated recommendations focused upon:

- ensuring that Department policy, procedures and guidelines are consistent with the intent of relevant legislation;
- actions to be taken by the Department in order to address identified areas of need and priorities for work to be done.

**Working Party Two** formulated recommendations focused upon:

- establishing the Building Inclusive Schools: Managing for Diversity professional learning program;
- an accountability mechanism to support the development of inclusive education;
- processes and structures to maintain inclusive education.

**Working Party Three** formulated recommendations focused upon:

- providing appropriate educational programs with a focus on teaching and learning, educational needs and curriculum provision;
- ensuring adjustments are provided and resourced according to student need;
- providing a transparent approach to information provision and decision making.



**Working Party Four** formulated recommendations focused upon:

- developing a new funding model supported by an allocative mechanism based on student needs;
- flexible use of resources in schools to support all students requiring teaching and learning adjustments.

**Working Party Five** formulated recommendations focused upon:

- identifying support requirements in implementing appropriate educational programs;
- ensuring access to evidence-based effective pedagogical practices for students requiring teaching and learning adjustments;
- ensuring that strong links with pre-service training providers support schools by providing appropriately qualified personnel.

**Working Party Six** formulated recommendations focused upon:

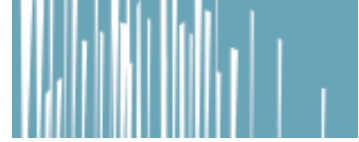
- ensuring that learning environments are able to meet the needs of all students in all educational settings;
- developing a framework and strategies for delivering flexible models of inclusive education;
- designing new facilities and the upgrading of existing schools.

**Working Party Seven** formulated recommendations focused upon:

- developing protocols to facilitate collaborative partnerships with other agencies;
- defining roles, responsibilities and expectations of all interested parties to ensure equity of service provision;
- processes for monitoring and evaluating services that address student, school and system characteristics.

For Working Party reports see:

<http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au/disrev/>



# Working Party Membership

## Chairpersons

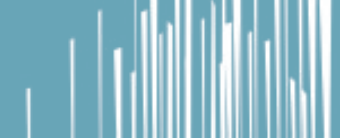
COLLINS	Margaret
HARVEY	Phil
HEALY	Liz
MORCOM	Donelle
NEWTON	Keith
SHORT	Peter
USHER	Kerry
WHEATLEY	Grant

## Executive Officers

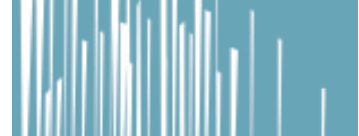
BRIGG	John
FAIRCLOUGH	Elizabeth
GOULDSON	Susan
HACKETT	Colleen
PAGE	Lloyd
SANDERS	Richard

## Members

AITKEN	Beth	Department of Education
AUSTIN	Mark	Department of Education
AUSTIN	Ken	Professional Association
AYLING	John	Department of Education
BAMFORD	Ron	Department of Education
BARNETT	Megan	Department of Education
BASTOW	Barry	Department of Education
BEARD	Lyn	Department of Education
BENNETT	Glen	Department of Education
BUCHANAN	Angus	Disability Services Commission
BUTI	Mandy	Community Representative
BUTI	Tony	Tertiary Representative
CHALMERS	Ron	Disability Services Commission
CLARK	KarenLee	Department of Education
COLE	Jennifer	Professional Association
COMAN	Pam	Professional Association
COYNE	Harley	Department of Education
DAY	Lynne	Department of Education



DEVERAUX	Sue	Professional Association
DULLARD	Kim	Department of Education
DUNCAN	Mike	Professional Association
EDMONSON	Janet	Professional Association
ERRINGTON	Helen	Community Representative
EXETER	John	Professional Association
FITZGERALD	Peter	Professional Association
FLANAGAN	Heath	Advocacy Group
FLETCHER	Jan	Tertiary Representatives
FORBES	Fiona	Professional Association
FORREST	Iris	Department of Education
GANDERTON	Emma	Department of Education
GARD	Marion	Professional Association
GARDNER	Judy	Department of Education
GEORGEFF	Natalie	Professional Association
GILBERT	Jan	Department of Education
GISBORNE	Ann	Professional Association
GLENDENNING	Peter	Department of Education
GLEW	Steve	Department of Education
GODFREY	Trish	Department of Education
GOSTELOW	Chris	Department of Education
GRAHAM	Shani	Professional Association
GRIFFITHS	Coosje	Department of Education
HALL	Guy	Community Representative
HARRIS	John	Department of Education
HARRIS	Sandra	Department of Education
HASLEBY	Jeanette	Department of Education
HAYES	Hylton	Department of Education
HESKETH	John	Department of Education
HEYWARD	John	Department of Education
HILLEN	Ruth	Department of Education
HOAREAU	Maggie	Community Representative
HOBDAY	Gordon	Advocacy Group
HUMPHREYS	Martin	Department of Education
INNES	Jeff	Professional Association
JACKSON	Robert	Advocacy Group, Tertiary Representative
JAKOWYNA	Nick	Professional Association



JENKINS	Heather	Tertiary Representative
JOHANSEN	Pat	Department of Education
KENNEDY	Therese	Advocacy Group
LANDER	Melanie	Department of Education
LAWLOR	Gabrielle	Department of Education
LAWRENCE	Bobbie	Department of Education
LAWSON	Anne	Disability Services Commission
LEE	David	Department of Education
LEE	Su-Hsien	Professional Association
LEMA	Marc	Disability Services Commission
LUCKMAN	Ross	Department of Education
MACNISH	Jeff	Professional Association
MARSDEN	Val	Department of Education
MARTINO	Terryl	Department of Education
MAWBAY	Helen	Professional Association
MCDONALD	Steph	Department of Education
MCKENZIE	Susan	Tertiary Representative
MORUP	Jenny	Curriculum Council
NEVILLE	Murray	Department of Education
NOWAK	Jo	Department of Education
OLIVER	Robyn	Department of Education
PARKER	Angela	Department of Education
PARR	Mal	Department of Education
PELLEGRINO	Kathy	Community Representative
PERLINSKI	Amanda	Disability Services Commission
PESCUD	Mark	Department of Education
PETTIT	Colin	Professional Association
POLLARD	Pam	Department of Education
REED	Taffy	Professional Association
RICE	Jean	Department of Education
RICHARDS	John	Department of Education
ROGUSZKA	Dianne	Department of Education
ROSENDORFF	Susan	Department of Education
RUTTER	Margaret	Department of Education
RYDER	Bernie	Department of Education
SARACENI	Brent	Department of Education
SEDGWICK	Tracy	Community Representative



SEMPLE	Judith	Department of Education
SHAW	Debra	Department of Education
SHEARDOWN	Leanne	Department of Education
SMAILES	Judith	Department of Education
SMITH	Robyn	Curriculum Council
STILLMAN	Jarrod	Government Department
STRATTON	Juliet	Professional Association
TAYLOR	Perisse	Department of Education
TAYLOR	Keith	Disability Services Commission
THATCHER	Peter	Department of Education
THORNTON	Tim	Department of Education
TILLEY	Fran	Professional Association
TOSTER	Pam	Disability Services Commission
TRAVERS	Greg	Professional Association
TRIFUNOVIC	Milan	Department of Education
TYSOE	Harry	Professional Association
VANDERNESS	Natalie	Government Department
VICKERS	Bev	Department of Education
VINCENT	Karen	Professional Association
WARD	Naomi	Department of Education
WATERHOUSE	Sue	Professional Association
WATSON	Mark	Department of Education
WEARN	Karen	Department of Education
WEBSTER	Karen	Department of Education
WHITE	Martin	Government Department
WILKINSON	Derek	Department of Education
WILLS	Darrell	Advocacy Group
WILSON	Neil	Curriculum Council
WILSON	Andrew	Professional Association
WOOD	David	Department of Education
WOODHAMS	Gwen	Community Representative
YATES	Marilyn	Department of Education



# Appendix 5: Summary of Feedback on Stage 1 of the Review

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The *Discussion Paper* (2002) was the culmination of work undertaken in 2001. It outlined seven principles and indicators for improved service delivery for students with disabilities that were developed as a result of the wide ranging consultations and submissions from key stakeholder groups. It also outlined six recommendations for facilitating progress during the next phase of the review. Feedback was sought from any interested party on the principles and indicators outlined in the *Discussion Paper* (2002). To facilitate this process a response form was enclosed with the document.

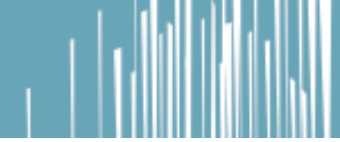
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More than three hundred responses were received from a range of stakeholder groups, submitted by both individuals and as collective replies. Of the responses received on the standard feedback forms, approximately 45% were from parents, 17% from school administrators, 15% from teachers and the remaining 23% from other respondents. Other respondents included responses from other agencies, education or disability service professionals and community members.

## **Acceptance of principles**

The majority of individuals and groups who responded to the request for feedback were in favour of the seven principles and the indicators of the principles. Only 11.7% of responses indicated some degree of disagreement to the question:

*Are these the best principles to describe quality education for students with disabilities in Western Australian government schools?*



The general feeling was that the seven principles provide a good foundation for the service provision for students with special educational needs in government schools. Many respondents expressed optimism that the models of service delivery that would be developed incorporating these principles would bring major benefits to all students.

*We believe that these principles have been well researched and are excellent to say the least. They also reflect world trends. If all schools adopt and implement these 7 principles then inclusion and integration will be very successful.*

Other responses, while endorsing the principles and indicators, were more guarded about the next stages of the process, reserving judgment until the models of service delivery are developed, resourced and implemented. There was an acknowledgement from many respondents that the resources required to enact the principles would be a major challenge. The following comment typifies the views that many people expressed:

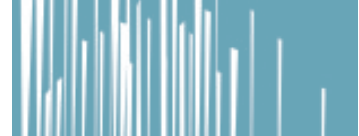
*The principles themselves are most appropriate as are each of the descriptors but the implementation and effective resourcing at the school level is the area where I believe the focus needs to be directed.*

A concern for some respondents was that the resourcing of the services based on these principles might be to the detriment of current facilities and services. The need to provide an adequate range of facilities and options was strongly expressed within the responses.

### **Acceptance of the indicators describing the principles**

Indicators that would be visible if each principle was being practiced were developed. Response was sought on whether these indicators were the best ones to describe the various principles. In the feedback form, each principle and its associated indicators were examined separately.

The indicators for all seven principles received positive endorsement across all respondent groups. While there were a few suggestions for some minor modification to some of the indicators, these suggested changes did not significantly alter the intent of the indicators. Some respondents called for the wording of the indicators to be more specific, feeling that they were too global to



be used as a practical measure of the successful operation of the principles. The indicators for principles 2 and 4, while still receiving positive endorsement, were not accepted to the same degree as the indicators for the other principles. It was lower rate of endorsement from some parents that lead to the lower overall ratings in these two areas, as the other respondent groups had relatively even acceptance across all seven principles. The reason some parents were concerned with the indicators associated with these two principles was a desire to see the maintenance of specialist facilities to meet the needs of their children.

### **Issues and themes emerging from the feedback**

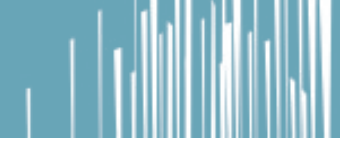
Within the various groups responding to the feedback opportunity, some specific themes and issues emerged. As previously mentioned, the resourcing issues associated with the provision of quality services for students with special needs were raised by all respondent groups. This comment represents the views of many respondents:

*No issue with the principles. The difficulty is always with the resourcing for the implementation.*

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The degree to which successful improvement in the services provided to students with special needs is dependent on appropriate levels and use of resources was highlighted by many respondents.

The responses from parents indicated that a choice of facilities was important to many parents. In their feedback, some parents expressed the strong desire that the services for their children would be available in a local school environment with the appropriate levels of support. Other parents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the current range of facilities and indicated a strong desire for the current range of facilities and services to be maintained or enhanced. Another issue that was expressed by many parents was the need for appropriate training for school administrators and teachers to enable successful implementation of services that truly reflected the seven principles. Another theme that emerged frequently in many of the responses was the strong desire, and perceived necessity, of parents being involved in all levels of decision making regarding the education of their children.

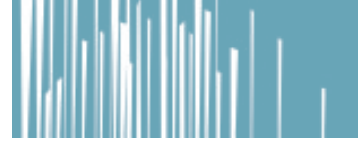


Amongst school administrators the major characteristic themes, apart from the universal resourcing concern, was for adequate and appropriate training for all personnel to enable them to provide the quality programs for all students in their classes. School administrators expressed a concern that many teachers in regular school situations were not trained or experienced in providing for the needs of students with special needs. Along with the need for training was the expressed need for sufficient and appropriate support mechanisms for teachers who were educating students with special educational needs in an inclusive environment.

For classroom teachers, the major concern was that the needs of all students are met and that the educational needs of the other students in the class should not be compromised in providing for the needs of students with special needs. This was seen largely as a matter of providing the appropriate level of resources, rather than allowing a situation where scarce resources might be diverted to meet the needs of a particular group of students. Teachers also echoed other groups in recognising the importance of appropriate training in order to provide a quality education for students with special needs.

The issues raised by the remaining respondents largely reinforced the issues voiced by other groups, with some slightly different emphasis. The right of parents to be active partners in decision making regarding their children was expressed by several respondents. The need for some form of advocacy service, along with a review mechanism for localised decision making, was seen as necessary to enable parents to participate as empowered partners in collaborative decision making for their children. Many of these respondents stated their belief in the advantages of inclusion, though some respondents did raise the issue of the cost effectiveness of providing services and support to students when spread across a large number of schools.

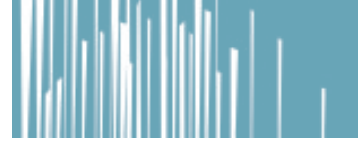
A final issue to emerge from the feedback responses was the particular needs of country students. There was strong feeling from many respondents, city and country, that the resourcing issues for country students may need to be viewed differently to city students. The necessity of local knowledge and assessment of the individual situation and supports needed was a recurring theme through many responses.



Crosby, I. (2002). *Analysis of Feedback from Stage 1 Review of Educational Services for Students with Disabilities in Government Schools*. Perth, Western Australia.

For full analysis of the feedback responses see:  
<http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au/disrev/>



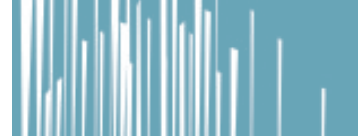


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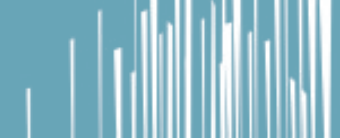
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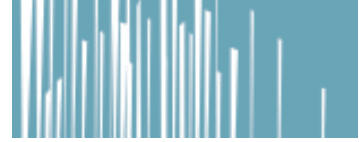
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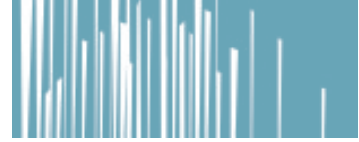
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