
Report snapshot

About this report

Australian and state legislation protects the right of students with disability to a quality education, free from discrimination. These require that students with disability be supported to access and participate in education on the same basis as their peers without disability.

This audit assessed whether the NSW Department of Education is effectively supporting students with disability in NSW public schools.

Findings

The Department has effectively designed approaches and developed reforms under its 2019 Disability Strategy and related measures.

But it still hasn't resolved longstanding issues with funding, access to targeted supports, monitoring school practice and tracking outcomes for students with disability.

This is despite the Department being made aware of these performance gaps for almost two decades across multiple audits, parliamentary inquiries and the recent national Disability Royal Commission.

Recommendations

The report makes five recommendations to address these gaps, including that the Department should:

- annually monitor the experiences and outcomes of students with disability to be able to identify and address emerging issues, and promote good practice
- reform funding to be better aligned to student needs
- enhance guidance and support to schools and families on making reasonable adjustments for students with disability.

Fast facts

158,000

Approximate number of students with disability in NSW in 2018 (around 1 in 5 students)

~30

Initiatives under the 2019 Disability Strategy

20 years

Since the last update of the Department's disability criteria

206,000

Approximate number of students with disability in NSW in 2023 (around 1 in 4 students)

\$55,737

Average amount of disability equity flexible funding provided per mainstream school in 2023

71%

Teachers surveyed in 2023 with confidence to meet the needs of students with disability