



Securing Better Futures through an Inclusive Education

Family Advocacy 2023 Election Campaign

BRIEFING PAPER

OUR VISION

Family Advocacy's Same Classroom, Same Opportunity - Securing Better Futures through an Inclusive Education campaign aims to ensure ALL students in NSW, no matter their circumstance, are welcomed and supported in the general classroom of their local school, all day, everyday.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Disability Royal Commission has heard that many children and young people with a disability are being excluded, segregated, unfairly suspended, forced to attend part-time, or subjected to a heightened risk of abuse, neglect and low expectations.

Sadly, children and young people with disability are set up on a life pathway with poor employment outcomes and social isolation from the general community. This is in conflict with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability and Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 to 2031*.

Children and young people with disability in NSW deserve better!

THE SOLUTION

The starting point to secure better futures for the one-in-five students learning with disability in NSW is through an inclusive education. We call upon the next NSW government to:

- Commit to an Inclusive Education Roadmap with a long term vision that will strengthen the system's capability including supporting teachers so students with disability can access and participate on the same basis as other students.
- Invest in a Work Transition Pilot Project to improve the transition of young people with disability from education to employment.

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WHY IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SO IMPORTANT?

Inclusive education is important for our school because it sees every child thrive in our community. There is an overwhelming amount of evidence-based research that supports disabled students learning alongside their peers in general education settings. Some of these benefits include:

Benefits for students who experience disability:

- greater academic and vocational outcomes
- greater social interaction, resulting in more opportunities to establish and maintain social connections
- increased development of speech.

Benefits for all students:

- elevated self-esteem
- improved behavioural development, with less 'disorderly' behaviour
- empathy and understanding
- opportunities to engage with friendships with a better understanding of how to include people of all abilities
- equitable education and care.

Children who engage in school alongside people with disabilities have also been found to benefit academically, with equal or improved outcomes than their peers in non-inclusive settings.

Benefits for teachers and educators:

- professional growth
- increased personal satisfaction
- confidence in delivering the curriculum.

Benefits for families and the community:

- greater psychological and economic wellbeing for parents
- parents may feel more supported and confident to return to work
- greater community engagement

