



Students with Disability: Parent and staff experience in Tasmanian Government Schools

Department of Education

Final report

March 2017

Executive summary

In August 2015, the Ministerial Taskforce Report *Improved Support for Students with Disability* was released. The Ministerial Taskforce identified significant barriers facing students with disability and their families and concerns about the level of engagement of students in mainstream education, including in the very early years of schooling. It found that considerable work remains to ensure consistent statewide application of inclusive education practices and compliance with statutory requirements in all Tasmanian Government schools.

The Ministerial Taskforce made recommendations to achieve inclusive education in Tasmania based on five key priority areas:

1. Disability ready and responsive schools
2. Quality teaching and learning
3. Working in partnership
4. A funding model to support inclusive practice
5. Monitoring and accountability.

Scope of work

As part of the Department of Education's response to the recommendations of the Ministerial Taskforce, the Department of Education engaged KPMG to support establishing an independent basis for understanding and measuring the lived experience and satisfaction of parents with students with disability in Tasmanian Government schools and for teachers working with students with disability. The scope of this work was to:

1. Establish a framework for ongoing measuring of satisfaction and experience of parents with students with disability in Tasmanian Government schools and for teachers working with students with disability. The framework closely aligned to the key priorities identified in the Ministerial Taskforce.
2. Conduct the first round of engagement, including conduct of four surveys to parents, support teachers, class teachers and principals; facilitation of parent focus groups; conduct of individual consultations
3. Complete supporting analysis of findings and associated reporting.

Key findings

The findings are presented by key theme aligned to the four key themes identified for measuring satisfaction and experience of parents with students with disability in Tasmanian Government schools (referred to as schools) and for teachers working with students with disability:

- Support and inclusiveness for students with a disability (inclusiveness)
- Partnerships with families of students with a disability (partnership with families)
- Resourcing for students with a disability (resourcing)
- Learning and development of teachers working with student with a disability – not asked of parents (Teacher Capability and Support)
- Other findings.

Across the themes there was a high level of variability in parental reporting of lived experience. This variability was aligned with findings from the Ministerial Taskforce report and is perhaps not surprising given the short elapsed time.

Inclusiveness

Survey findings indicated that across the surveyed groups (parents, support teachers, class teachers and principals) most respondents felt there is a high level of inclusivity in terms of school culture for students with a disability. This positive response was consistent across all respondent groups. While levels of inclusivity perceived varied across the survey groups, overall results tended to indicate that the closer the person surveyed is to the student with a disability the less likely they are to feel that their schools culture is inclusive for students with a disability.

While the number of parents attending the forums was small (21 in total), those attending reported a wide spectrum of lived experience in terms of the level of inclusiveness that their child had experienced at school. Most parents described a level of dissatisfaction with how well their child was included in school.

Partnership with families

Findings from the parent forums and surveys suggest there is considerable variation in the level of partnership with parents in practice. While overall most survey groups were satisfied with their level of involvement in educational goal setting and parent/guardian involvement, there appears to be an absence of consistent process and practice in schools to foster, develop and maintain a partnership with families.

Resourcing

In terms of satisfaction with a school's ability to make reasonable adjustments, the majority of respondents from the four cohorts were either completely or mostly satisfied that their school is able to provide reasonable adjustments needed to cater for students with a disability.

Across the four survey groups, the adjustments or supports that were prioritised as likely to have the greatest impact on the school's ability to cater for students with a disability were:

- Modifying programs and adapting curriculum delivery and assessment strategies
- Professional learning and training for staff
- Additional personnel such as tutors or assistants for personal care or mobility assistance.

At the forums parents of children with a diagnosed disability that received a higher level of support generally reported greater satisfaction with resourcing.

Teacher capability and support

The majority of principals thought that they had completely or mostly created a supportive environment for teachers who work with students with a disability however principals and class room teachers surveyed suggested there was opportunity for further development of teacher skills to adequately support students with a disability at their school.

Class room teachers suggested via survey that they receive varying levels of support in teaching students with a disability from their principal, professional support staff, teacher assistants and the broader school community, the higher levels of support from support staff and teacher assistants. These findings suggest demonstrable examples of good practice but considerable variation and opportunity for improvement.

Considerations for future engagement

Development of the framework and conduct of the first round of engagement provides a strong platform for further engagement with the cohort groups. Robust survey response rates (particularly from support teachers), and the volume and detail of free text comment responses suggests a high level of engagement and interest in students with disability. Conduct of the parent forums and

surveys has identified a range of areas for consideration to enhance the promotion, process and conduct of these methods that will assist with maintaining and enhancing the engagement in terms of response rates and participation. A range of process and outcome Key Performance Indicators have been identified for consideration and further development in discussion with the Department.

This work has provided:

- a framework for ongoing engagement with parents of students with disability and school staff
- a range of methods that provide a platform for ongoing measurement against the priorities of the Ministerial Taskforce
- a basis for monitoring of change over time and the extent to which views were consistent or divergent across the survey groups.

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Inherent Limitations

This report has been prepared as outlined in the Scope Section. The services provided in connection with this engagement comprise an advisory engagement, which is not subject to assurance or other standards issued by the Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards Board and, consequently no opinions or conclusions intended to convey assurance have been expressed.

The findings in this report are based on a qualitative study and the reported results reflect a perception of parents of students with disability, support and classroom teachers, and principals in Tasmania Government schools but only to the extent of the sample surveyed, informed by the Department of Education's approved list of Government schools. Any projection to the wider stakeholders is subject to the level of bias in the method of sample selection.

No warranty of completeness, accuracy or reliability is given in relation to the statements and representations made by, and the information and documentation provided by stakeholders consulted as part of the process.

KPMG have indicated within this report the sources of the information provided. We have not sought to independently verify those sources unless otherwise noted within the report.

KPMG is under no obligation in any circumstance to update this report, in either oral or written form, for events occurring after the report has been issued in final form.

The findings in this report have been formed on the above basis.

Third Party Reliance

This report is solely for the purpose set out in the Scope Section and for the Department of Education's information, and is not to be used for any other purpose or distributed to any other party without KPMG's prior written consent.

This report has been prepared at the request of the Department of Education in accordance with the terms of KPMG's engagement letter/contract dated 29 September 2016. Other than our responsibility to the Department of Education neither KPMG nor any member or employee of KPMG undertakes responsibility arising in any way from reliance placed by a third party on this report. Any reliance placed is that party's sole responsibility.

1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the background and context to this report, and outlines the scope and methodology of the engagement.

1.1 Background – Ministerial Taskforce

In August 2015, the Ministerial Taskforce Report *Improved support for students with disability* was released. The Ministerial Taskforce was established in 2014 with the recognition that, despite laws, policy guidelines and funding committed to the principle that students with disability have the same rights as all other students to access and participate in meaningful education; in practice many students with disability and their families were experiencing exclusion from schools.

The Ministerial Taskforce membership comprised representation from parents, community members, and representatives of advocacy organisations and the education sector. The Ministerial Taskforce considered public submissions, expert practice and policy presentations and academic and research materials in order to reach its findings, which were made in relation to Government and Non-government schools.

The Ministerial Taskforce identified significant barriers facing students with disability and their families and concerns about the level of engagement of students in mainstream education, including in the very early years of schooling. It found that considerable work remains to ensure consistent statewide application of inclusive education practices and compliance with statutory requirements in all Tasmanian schools.

The Ministerial Taskforce made recommendations to achieve inclusive education in Tasmania based on five key priority areas:

1. Disability ready and responsive schools
2. Quality teaching and learning
3. Working in partnership
4. A funding model to support inclusive practice
5. Monitoring and accountability.

Implementation of Ministerial Taskforce recommendations

The Department of Education (the Department) is working to inform and support implementation of the Ministerial Taskforce recommendations. In particular, the Department is seeking to establish an independent basis for understanding and measuring the lived experience and satisfaction of parents with students with disability in Tasmanian Government schools and for teachers working with students with disability. This work will provide information to support the implementation of two of the Ministerial Taskforce recommendations, outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Ministerial Taskforce recommendations to be informed by findings of this report

Recommendation	Detail
Recommendation 1(b)	<i>Identify and prioritise key performance indicators for all principals to measure improvements and progress towards more inclusive school communities.</i>
Recommendation 1(d)	<p><i>All schools to become disability ready and responsive through developing clear and measurable actions within the school's planning process to continually progress towards the goal of inclusive schools, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Undertaking an audit of current processes and facilities to ensure barriers are identified</i> • <i>Developing and implementing an action plan to prioritise the removal of identified barriers</i> • <i>Developing and implementing appropriate collaborative processes to assess and respond to need; and</i> • <i>Planning and delivering professional learning to ensure teachers and other staff are trained to work effectively with students with disability and their families is a whole of school priority.</i>

Source: Ministerial Taskforce (2015), *Improved Support for Students with Disability – Ministerial Taskforce Report*, p. 24

1.2 Scope

In order to support its work to inform and support implementation of the Ministerial Taskforce recommendations outlined in Table 1, the Department engaged KPMG to:

- Establish a framework for ongoing measuring satisfaction and experience of parents with students with disability in Tasmanian Government schools and for teachers working with students with disability
- Conduct of the first round of engagement (i.e. conduct of surveys, facilitation of focus groups, conduct of individual consultations, and supporting analysis and reporting).

This report outlines the findings of the engagement. In addition, the output of this work will provide data to support school improvement targets.

1.3 Approach

The approach to this engagement involved the following stages:

- Stage one – the identification of key themes to guide engagement with stakeholders.
- Stage two – the development and implementation of engagement methods for collecting qualitative data about the experiences of parents of students with disability, support and classroom teachers, and principals in Tasmania Government schools. The engagement methods were surveys, consultation forums and telephone interviews.
- Stage three – the analysis of findings from preceding stages of this engagement and development of considerations for future engagement.

Each stage is described in more detail in the following sections.

1.3.1 Stage one

Stage one involved desktop research and discussion with the Department to identify four key themes to explore with key stakeholders during this engagement. Based on the combined findings from discussion and recommendations of the Ministerial Taskforce Report, the following four broad and inter-related concepts were identified:

- Support and inclusiveness for students with a disability
- Partnerships with families of students with a disability
- Resourcing for students with a disability
- Learning and development of teachers working with student with a disability – not asked of parents.

These four key themes informed the development of data collection tools outlined in stage two of the approach to this engagement, below.

1.3.2 Stage two

Stage two involved the development of data collection tools and engagement with key stakeholders via three methods: surveys, consultation forums and interviews. These engagement methods are outlined in more detail in the following sections. Discussion of process findings associated with conduct of these methods and lessons learned are presented in section 3.

1.3.2.1 Surveys

In conjunction with the Department four related surveys were developed to capture the experiences of the following stakeholder groups:

- parents of students with disability
- support teachers
- classroom teachers
- principals.

The surveys (presented at Appendix B) are qualitative in nature, exploring and measuring the views of each stakeholder group. The surveys focus on the four key themes identified during stage one of this engagement (although the 'learning and development of teachers' key theme was not asked of parents).

Where possible questions relating to each concept were kept consistent in wording, form and scale across surveys to enable analysis of responses across surveys to highlight gaps between experiences and expectations for different stakeholder groups. The surveys were also deliberately kept short to minimise response burden and support response rates.

Surveys were available online using the online survey tool Qualtrics, which is made available to respondents via web (including via mobile phone) and meets web content accessibility guidelines (i.e. screen readers can be used to assist with survey completion). Surveys included information for respondents to access support to complete the survey via a free-call 1800 telephone number and email contact to a KPMG team member.

All surveys were distributed by email. The Department was responsible for emailing out the survey introductory text and the survey link to principals and support teachers. Principals received an email which contained a link and introductory text to the:

- principal survey
- class teacher survey – to be forwarded to class teachers
- parent survey – to be forwarded to parents.

In practice, this process meant principals were invited to complete a survey and also were required to forward two surveys onwards (to teachers and to parents). During the survey piloting process,

undertaken with three principals, none identified that forwarding on the surveys would be problematic.

An overview of the sample, distribution method and duration of each survey is provided at Table 2.

Table 2: Survey sample, distribution and duration by stakeholder group

Survey	Sample	Distributed by	Period open (2016)	Number of completed surveys	Population size	Response rate
Parents	One parent per child	Email from Department to principals, whom forwarded on to parents	Wed. 9 Nov. to Tues. 6 Dec.	113	Not available (open sample)	Not applicable
Support teachers	Census	Email – Department	Mon. 24 Oct. to Fri. 16 Nov.	171	196	87%
Classroom teachers	Selected teachers – Principal	Email from Department to principals, whom forwarded on to class teachers	Wed. 9 Nov. to Tues. 6 Dec.	183	Not available (selected by school Principal)	Not applicable
Principals	Census	Email – Department	Wed. 9 Nov. to Tues. 6 Dec.	108	196	55%

Source: KPMG

1.3.2.2 Parent forums and interviews

KPMG held six parent forums across Tasmania. The forum locations were Launceston, Devonport and Hobart. The forums were designed to provide parents of students with disability with an additional engagement mechanism to explore key question areas. An overview of forum locations, date and time, and the number of attendees is outlined in Table 3. Invitations for the forums were extended to parents approximately seven to ten days prior to the forum date.

The forums were supported by two documents (provided at Appendix C), an information sheet for participants and a 'speaker note' document with key questions for the facilitator to support consistent delivery of forums across each location. Key questions were developed based on the first three of the four key themes identified during stage one.

Parents of students with disability were invited to each forum by the principal of the school their child attends. Via the survey and verbally at the forums, parents were also offered one-on-one telephone interviews to parents that were unable to attend consultation forums. One parent interview was requested and completed by telephone.

As noted in Table 3 there were two forums for which there were no attendees. Section 3 highlights a range of considerations identified for improving attendance at forums including further lead time, promotion of the forums and their location. Given the relatively small number of parents attending the forums, views expressed at from the forums have been used to highlight the themes from the survey, and to provide counterpoint where appropriate (i.e. reflecting a spectrum of views).

Table 3: Overview of parent of student with disability forum location, date and time, and number of attendees

Forum location	Date and time	No. of attendees
Northern Support School, Launceston	Wed. 16 November, 1:30pm to 3:00pm	0
Newstead College, Launceston	Thursday 17 November, 1:30pm to 3:00pm	0
Devonport Primary School, Devonport	Friday 18 November, 1:30pm to 3:00pm	5
New Town High School, Hobart	Monday 21 November, 1:30pm to 3:00pm	7
Clarence High School, Hobart	Monday 21 November, 6:00pm to 7:30pm	2
Kingston Primary School, Hobart	Tuesday 22 November, 6:00pm to 7:30pm	7

Source: KPMG

1.3.3 Stage three

Stage three involved the analysis and synthesis of the data collected via the four surveys, four consultation forums and telephone interview. The findings have been used to develop a range of considerations for the Department for future engagement with stakeholders.

1.4 Structure of this report

This report is structured as follows:

- Section one (this section) provides an overview of the background and scope of this report, and the approach taken by KPMG to develop the findings outlined in this report.
- Section two outlines the key findings from phase two of this engagement, the surveys, forums and interviews.
- Section three provides an overview of considerations for future engagement with parents of students with disability, support and classroom teachers, and principals.

The report is supported by a series of appendices:

- Appendix A: survey findings for each individual survey
- Appendix B: survey questionnaires for each individual survey
- Appendix C: consultation guides and questions.

2 Key findings

This section presents the key findings from the stakeholder engagement activities to understand parent and staff experience for Students with a Disability. The findings are presented by key theme aligned to the four key themes identified for measuring satisfaction and experience of parents with students with disability in Tasmanian Government schools (referred to as schools) and for teachers working with students with disability:

- Support and inclusiveness for students with a disability (inclusiveness)
- Partnerships with families of students with a disability (partnership with families)
- Resourcing for students with a disability (resourcing)
- Learning and development of teachers working with student with a disability – not asked of parents (Teacher Capability and Support)
- Other findings.

Each section presents a summary of findings from the three data collection methods: the surveys, parent forums and parent interviews.

2.1 Inclusiveness

2.1.1 Survey findings

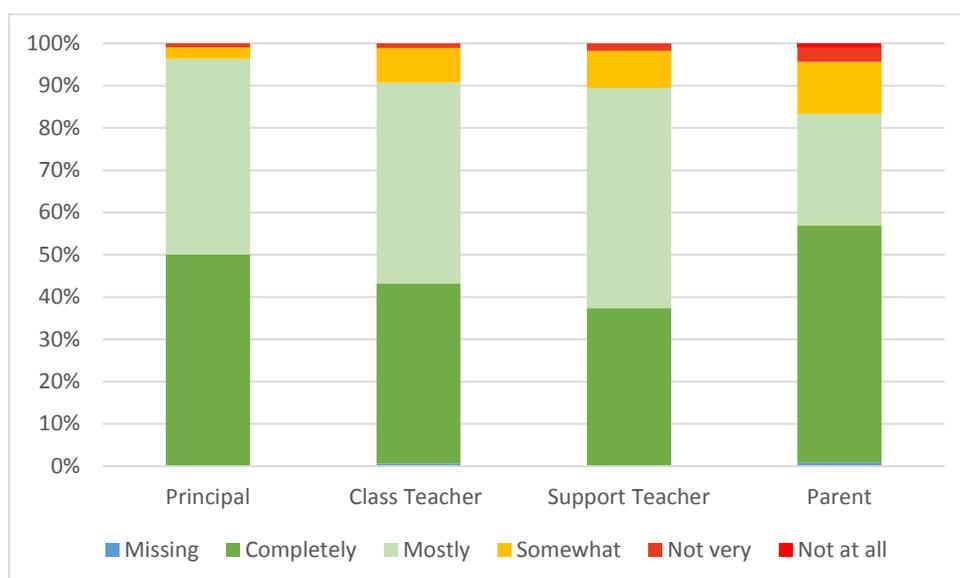
Across the four surveys there were two key questions that were broadly consistent. The first question was consistent in wording across the four surveys. That scaled question was “Overall how inclusive do you feel your school is for student with a disability?” The second free text response question was consistent in wording across the support teacher, class teacher and parent surveys. “Do you have any suggestions on how your school could be more inclusive for students with a disability” The analysis below focusses on these two questions with additional tables and figures available in the appendix.

2.1.1.1 Overall inclusiveness

The overall inclusiveness question asked how inclusive each of the four cohorts considered their school to be. The responses were broadly similar across the four cohorts. Across the four cohorts respondents indicated that they considered their school to be completely or mostly inclusive. With over 80 per cent of respondents in all surveys selecting one of these two response options (the green shaded area in Figure 1 below).

The noticeable difference is that principals had the highest proportion of respondents selecting one of these two options (96 per cent), followed by class teachers (90 per cent), followed by support teachers (89 per cent), which were followed by parents (83 per cent). While the finding is not definitive it tends to indicate that the closer the person is to the student with a disability the less likely they are to feel that their school’s culture is inclusive for students with a disability.

Figure 1. Overall, how inclusive do you feel your schools culture is for students with a disability?



Source: KPMG

2.1.1.2 Suggestions for being more inclusive

The class teacher, support teacher and parent survey each contained questions asking “Do you have any suggestions on how your school could be more inclusive for students with a disability?” This question was not asked of principals. Principals were asked about the approaches and structures in place at the school to support students.

These free text questions were well responded to for each of the cohorts. With 108 of the 183 classroom teachers, 92 of the 171 support teachers and 41 of the 113 parents providing suggestions to being more inclusive. Comments across the three cohorts generally related to the key themes of:

- Increased support staff/teacher assistants
- Increased funding (generally specifying for more support staff)
- Continued professional development/training
- Some comments related to the physical building layout

Some example comments are outlined in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Example responses to suggestions to being more inclusive

Class Teacher Survey	Support Teacher Survey	Parent Survey
<i>More teacher assistant time to support students with a disability.</i>	<i>Ongoing professional development is needed to ensure staff capacity and expertise is continually improved in regards to differentiation.</i>	<i>No as my child is included in all aspects of school life.</i>
<i>Increase collaborative planning between teachers for lessons/cross curricular that tie in to ILP</i>	<i>The physical layout is a barrier to students with physical disabilities.</i>	<i>Communication with parents seeing the IEP changes.</i>

Class Teacher Survey	Support Teacher Survey	Parent Survey
<i>I would like more details / assistance on planning more effective teaching programs for children specifically at the start of the year.</i>	<i>Overall working well within limited resources.</i>	<i>Ensuring all teachers have completed relevant disability training.</i>

Source: KPMG

Principals were asked the following two free text responses in the inclusiveness section of the survey.

- What processes or procedures do you have in place at your school to support students with a disability?
- What approaches/structures do you have in place at a school-wide level to support students with disabilities?

For the process and procedure question 101 of the 108 principals wrote a response while 103 of the 108 principals wrote a response for the approaches/structures questions. This reflects a high level of engagement and elicited detailed responses (see examples in Table 5). Comments generally related to appropriate staffing levels (i.e. supports), professional learning and development, developing and reviewing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and creating a supportive school environment and culture.

Table 5. Principal responses to questions related to processes/procedures and approaches/structures in their school

Processes/procedures	Approaches/structures
<i>Differentiated curriculum that takes into account interests and background of the students, in class support and ICT that is adaptive to the student's needs.</i>	<i>Whole school respectful relationships ethos that enables students to work and relate to staff and peers within a class setting that is supportive, challenging</i>
<i>Students are catered for in learning programs, planning for teaching through IEPs and PLPs making adjustments for learning. Parents/carers meet with teachers to discuss children's learning and progress.</i>	<i>School-wide policies regarding harassment and mechanisms for students to access assistance; knowledge sharing regarding individual students; grade structures, including the role of tutor group teacher;</i>
<i>Support Teacher employed. Teacher Assistants timetabled according to need. All staff completed Disability Standards modules in 2016 - expectation is that the standards are applied at all times. Teachers collaboratively contribute to IEPs.</i>	<i>Differentiated instruction to support student learning. Use of Professional Learning Community and data wall to track individual student progress. Resources to support pedagogical approaches to students with disabilities. Inclusive classrooms and playgrounds. Parental engagement and communication.</i>

Source: KPMG

2.1.2 Forum findings

2.1.2.1 Student experiences

Parents reported a wide spectrum of lived experience in terms of the level of inclusiveness that their child had experienced at school. Of the 21 parents, most parents described a level of challenge with how well their child was included in school – both in terms of day to day class room learning activities, and in terms of participation and inclusion in the spectrum of activities across the school experience (e.g. excursions, assembly). One parent highlighted an outstanding experience with the school principal stating to the parent they would, “do what it takes to provide a supportive and full school experience” for all students.

Of the 21 parents, a number of parents suggested their child was not well included in school activities and there was limited learning and social development opportunities. Parents described their child 'being managed' to minimise disruption to the class rather than supporting their child's learning and social needs to participate in the classroom and school experience.

Of the 21 parents, a number of parents reported that their child had been bullied at school. Parents in general felt strongly that there needs to be more support around bullying.

2.1.2.2 Transition periods

Forums highlighted that transition periods were of significant concern to parents. This included transition between primary and secondary school, and between classes each year at the same school.

Parents described a perceived lack of process for when a student moved from one grade to the next, or from one teacher to the next. For example, one parent noted that they were required to meet with each teacher within the same school to discuss their child's needs, and that each teacher did not appear to receive a 'handover' from the previous teacher, either verbally or by document.

Transition to secondary school was likewise an area of concern for parents with children currently in primary school. Parents described their concern that the education support that their child had received to date would disappear when they transitioned to a larger high school. Parents with children in secondary schools commonly noted that they perceived the support that their child received decreased once they left primary school.

2.2 Partnerships with families

2.2.1 Survey findings

The 'partnerships with families' questions that were consistent across the four cohorts asked as to the level of satisfaction with involvement in educational goal setting and educational planning. Specifically the survey asked of principals, support teachers and class teachers: How satisfied are you that parents or guardians of students with a disability at your school are appropriately involved in:

- Educational goal setting for their child
- Educational planning for their child.

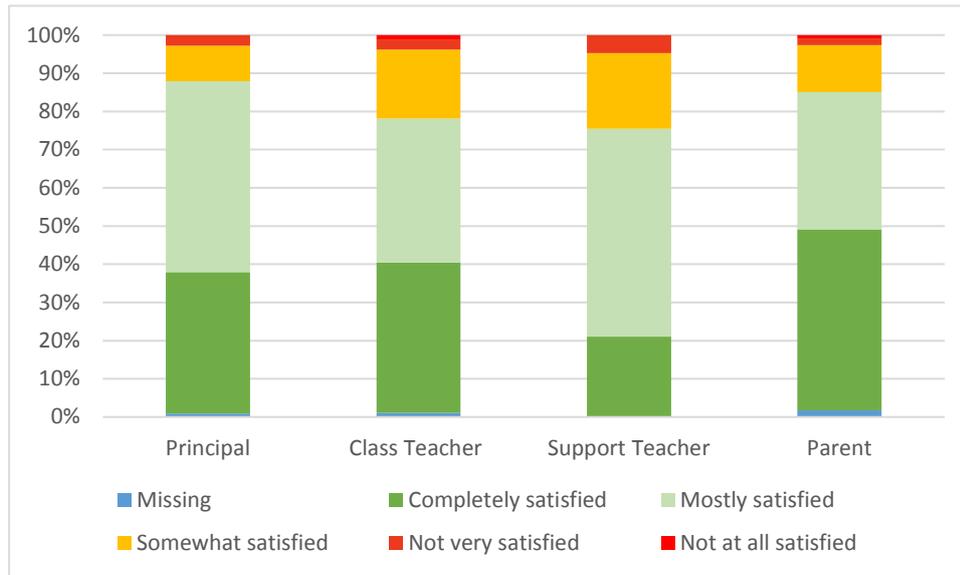
This question was phrased differently for parents. It was phrased as "How satisfied are you with the level of your involvement in," (education goal setting and education planning for your child). The analysis below focusses on these two questions, support teacher involvement in developing IEPs and qualitative feedback from the four cohorts around their suggestions for parents or guardians of students with a disability could be better involved in goal setting and or planning for their child. Additional tables and figures are available in Appendix A.

2.2.1.1 Educational goal setting and planning

Across the four cohorts respondents indicated that they were completely or mostly satisfied with parent or guardian involvement in educational goal setting. With over 75 per cent of respondents in all cohorts selecting one of these two response options (the green shaded areas in Figure 2).

Principals had the highest proportion of respondents selecting one of these two options (87 per cent), which was followed by parents (83 per cent). Support teachers (75 per cent) and class teachers (77 per cent) reported similar proportions being completely or mostly satisfied with parent involvement. A comparison has not been undertaken at type of school level (i.e. primary or high school), or indeed comparing responses from the same schools, to explore whether views are consistent or divergent within and across schools.

Figure 2. How satisfied are you with parent or guardian involvement in educational goal setting?

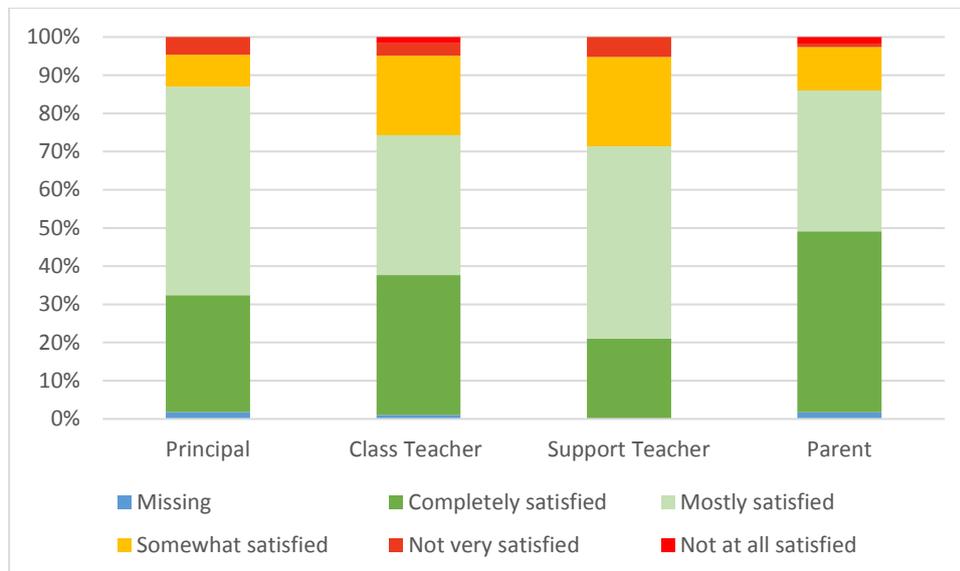


Source: KPMG

For the following question on education planning principals had the highest proportion of respondents selecting either completely or mostly satisfied (87 per cent), which was followed by parents (83 per cent). Support teachers (75 per cent) and class teachers (77 per cent) reported similar proportions being completely or mostly satisfied with parent involvement in educational planning.

Class teachers, support teachers and parents are most likely to be involved in the educational planning for the student with a disability. Specifically the development of an IEP. The difference in the views of the teacher (class and support) and parent cohort is not substantial (i.e. it is only 8 percentage points difference between support teachers and parents). Ongoing measurement of educational goal setting and planning will provide insights as to whether parents, class and support teachers are continuing to work together to develop and regularly review IEPs.

Figure 3. How satisfied are you with parent or guardian involvement in educational planning?

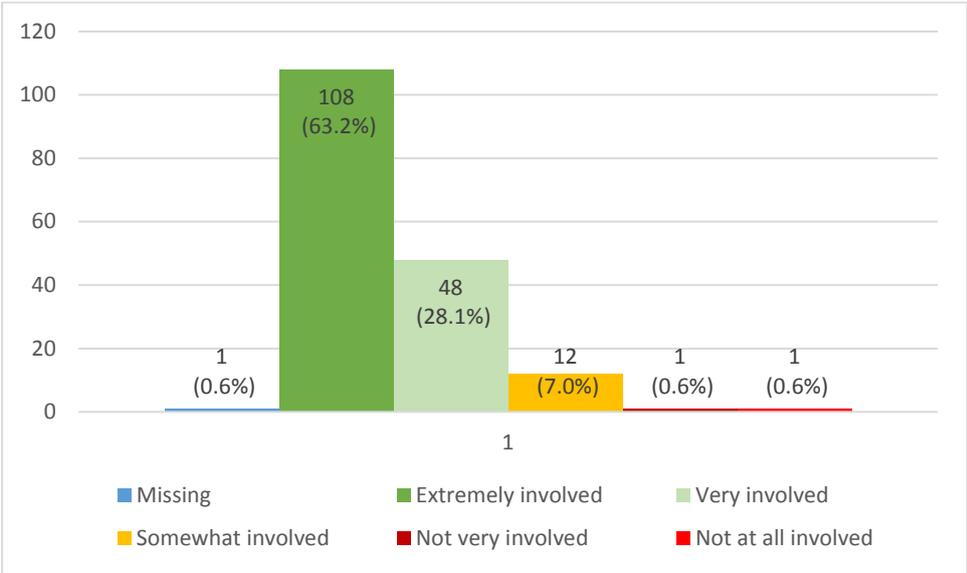


Source: KPMG

2.2.1.2 Developing Individual Education Plans

The support teacher survey was almost a census of all support teachers working in government schools. Teacher assistants can also make a valuable contribution to support the implementation of individual education plans and student learning.¹ Support teachers were asked the extent to which they are involved in developing IEPs. The majority of support teachers indicated that they were extremely or very involved in developing IEPs (91 per cent). Less than 10 per cent of support teachers indicated lower levels of involvement. This is outlined in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. To what extent are you involved in developing Individual Education Plans? (Support teacher survey)



Source: KPMG

2.2.1.3 Suggestions for involving parents and guardians in goal setting and planning

The four surveys each contained a question asking “Do you have any suggestions on how your school could be more inclusive for students with a disability?” This free text question was reasonably well responded to for each of the cohorts. With 69 of the 108 principals, 58 of the 183 classroom teachers, 76 of the 171 support teachers and 35 of the 113 parents providing suggestions to being more inclusive. Comments across the cohorts were generally positive and offered practical approaches to increasing engagement. However principals, class teachers and support teachers did point out that some parents and guardians were difficult to engage in goal setting and planning. Some examples are outlined in Table 6.

¹ Giangreco, M (2003) Working with paraprofessionals. Educational Leadership, 61(2), 50-53.

Table 6. Example responses to suggestions for involving parents and guardians in goal setting and planning

Principal survey	Class Teacher Survey	Support Teacher Survey	Parent Survey
<i>Perhaps through shared electronic access to the individualised educational plan.</i>	<i>Some parents are reluctant to come and participate in the process. Having parents participating in phone calls concerning IEPs if they don't come into the school should be seen as an acceptable process for sharing expectations and future goals.</i>	<i>More use of case conferences and IEP meeting times.</i>	<i>The school has been highly committed in recent years to my son. It has been a challenging time for the school as well as us and our son.</i>
<i>Use of social media to communicate with them</i>	<i>Regular contact between home and school, whether a communication diary or an email set-up, plus regular updating of goals on IEP's as needed.</i>	<i>Perhaps more opportunities for consultation in the process - not being presented with a completed learning plan to be signed off, rather ideas for key outcomes and goals and then working with teachers to produce the final learning plan.</i>	<i>I am happy with this, I am always consulted and have ongoing conversations with teachers and support staff</i>
<i>In our context it can be difficult to engage the parents in the process. I believe this is because the parents trust the school and/or find it uncomfortable in the school environment.</i>	<i>They are always invited, but often don't take the opportunity</i>	<i>Parents need to actively attend meetings organised to include them in the planning process. / Respond to opportunities to comment and have input into the plans. Often even if sent a plan they will not respond in anyway.</i>	<i>Perhaps a routine mid-year catch up to discuss on how they are progressing towards specific goals</i>

Source: KPMG

2.2.2 Forum findings

2.2.2.1 Individual Education Plans

Compliance with the requirement that children have Individual Learning Plans (IEPs) was variable across schools. Some parents reported that their child had an IEP, while others reported that their child did not.

Parents noted that the quality of IEPs, and the impact of the IEPs on their child's education, largely depended on the quality of their child's teacher, and the extent to which the teacher was willing and able to implement the IEP. Parents emphasised that for IEPs to be meaningful, it is necessary for the IEPs to be reviewed regularly and updated as the child's needs changed. However, the forums highlighted that not all parents were aware of school obligations with regards to the development and regular review of IEPs. Of the 21 parents who attended the forums, it was reported that often their child's IEP was only reviewed when the parent had 'pushed for it', i.e. had notified the teacher and followed up until the review occurred. Some parents described actively participating in the development of the IEP for their child while other parents described the plan being given to them in a completed form.

Parents at the forum indicated that IEPs were more effective when a wide range of stakeholders were involved in the development and review of the plan with the teaching staff and the parent/s, including professionals such as occupational therapists and speech pathologists, and an Autism Consultant. One parent described an excellent IEP review process that had involved the child's teacher, teacher assistant, a special education teacher, an autism consultant and the child's parents.

2.2.2.2 Information sharing and transparency

At the forums, parents highlighted that communication between school and parents is critical to success and really important for parent satisfaction and management of the child's needs. As one parent stated, *'Parents know their children best, and can assist in helping teachers understand their children and their learning patterns/behaviours'*.

Parents attending the forums noted that a common barrier to partnerships with families was a perceived lack of transparency and information sharing between the school and parents. This included access to detailed information about the funding that a child may be entitled to, and how any provided funding is being used by the school to support a child.

A number of parents at the forums reported that they did not feel like their child's school was an active partner with them in relation to seeking funding. A number of parents across forums also suggested that schools were not knowledgeable enough about the different types of funding for which students may be eligible.

2.3 Resourcing

2.3.1 Survey findings

The resourcing questions were very similar across all four surveys. The three key questions were

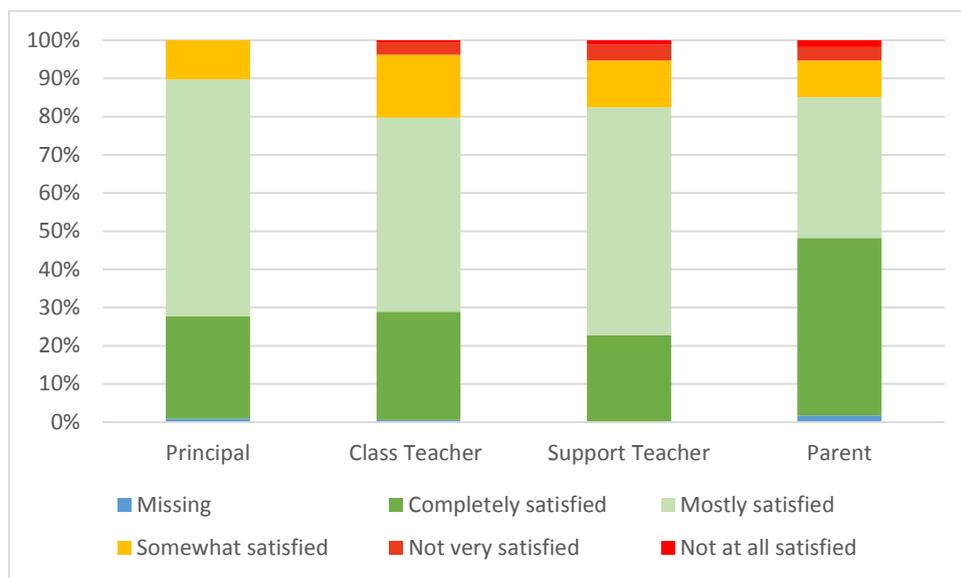
- To what extent are you satisfied that your school is able to provide reasonable adjustments needed to cater for students with disability?
- Please select three adjustments or supports from the list below that you feel would have the greatest impact on your school's ability to cater for students with a disability?
- Do you have any suggestions as to how the Department could ensure that reasonable adjustments needed for students with a disability can be made?

Given the similarity across the survey tools the results are presented for each of these three questions for the four cohorts.

2.3.1.1 Satisfaction with school's ability to make reasonable adjustments

The majority of respondents from the four cohorts were either completely or mostly satisfied that their school is able to provide reasonable adjustments needed to cater for students with a disability. Of the principals that responded (89 per cent) were completely or mostly satisfied, followed by support teachers and parents both with 83 per cent of respondents being completely or mostly satisfied and with class teachers having the lowest proportion being completely or mostly satisfied (79 per cent).

Figure 5. To what extent are you satisfied that your school is able to provide reasonable adjustments needed to cater for students with disability?



Source: KPMG

2.3.1.2 Three adjustments or supports that would make the greatest impact

Each of the four cohorts were asked to identify three adjustments or supports that would make the greatest impact. The response options were consistent across the three surveys and they were:

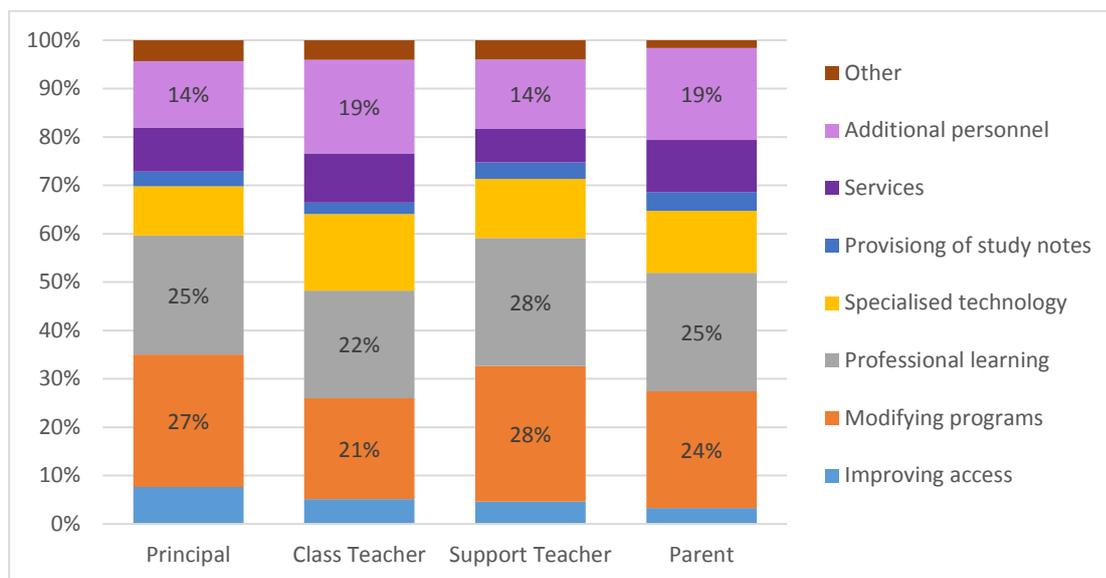
- Improving physical access to buildings/facilities
- Modifying programs and adapting curriculum delivery and assessment strategies
- Professional learning and training for staff
- Specialised technology or computer software or equipment
- Provision of study notes or research materials in different formats
- Services such as sign language interpreters, visiting school teams or specialist support staff
- Additional personnel such as tutors or assistants for personal care or mobility assistance
- Other (please specify)

Across the four cohorts the responses were fairly consistent in terms of adjustments or supports that would have the greatest impact on the school's ability to cater for students with a disability. The top three options were

- Modifying programs and adapting curriculum delivery and assessment strategies (See orange shaded area in Figure 6)
- Professional learning and training for staff (See grey shaded area in Figure 6)
- Additional personnel such as tutors or assistants for personal care or mobility assistance (See mauve shaded area in Figure 6)

The Department may wish to consider these findings in determining prioritisation of planning and support of schools in these three particular areas.

Figure 6. Please select three adjustments or supports from the list below that you feel would have the greatest impact on your school's ability to cater for students with a disability



Source: KPMG

2.3.1.3 Suggestions to ensure that reasonable adjustments can be made

Each of the four cohorts was asked "Do you have any suggestions as to how the Department could ensure that reasonable adjustments needed for students with a disability can be made?" This free text question was reasonably well responded to for each of the cohorts. With 83 of the 108 principals, 91 of the 183 classroom teachers, 85 of the 171 support teachers and 37 of the 113 parents providing suggestions to ensure that reasonable adjustments can be made. Comments across the cohorts often mentioned funding and provided some suggestions for funding changes (e.g. funding for particular cohorts of students). Other comments frequently related to professional development and training and this was mentioned across principal, class teacher and support teacher surveys. Some examples are outlined in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Example responses to ensure that reasonable adjustments can be made

Principal survey	Class Teacher Survey	Support Teacher Survey	Parent Survey
<i>Provision of adequate resourcing, particularly for those with significant behaviour challenges on the autism spectrum.</i>	<i>Increased staffing and funding.</i>	<i>SDR funding is too low. If you use 100% on TA wages you still don't get 2.5 days per student, per week, which is not enough to support inclusion successfully.</i>	<i>Be willing to step outside the regular methods of teaching and look at alternatives such as DIR Floortime techniques which helps to increase interactions and connection with children with autism. When interactions and connections are made there is an increase in opportunities for learning.</i>

Principal survey	Class Teacher Survey	Support Teacher Survey	Parent Survey
<i>Resource support teachers to an adequate level / Shift the focus from compliance documentation to useful documentation /</i>	<i>Additional funding for support staff!!! / Specialised PL for support staff / assistants / teachers</i>	<i>Continue to provide information and professional development for teachers, principals.</i>	<i>Training for teachers in the challenges students with an ASD deal with and how to support them within the school environment. Our child's teachers have been wonderful in supporting her to manage her sensory and overload issues, executive functioning deficits etc., but this is only because we (her parents) explained things in details and participated in the application for the SDR etc.</i>
<i>Professional Learning for ALL staff on both specific disabilities (e.g. all staff need an excellent understanding of autism) and inclusive practices.</i>	<i>Increasing funding to allow for very small classes and highly targeted support is probably the most significant improvement the Department could make. / / It is also vital that a TCE alternative that is more user-friendly than the TCEA is developed and training provided to schools to ensure that students with a disability have the opportunity to receive certification for their senior secondary engagement and learning. The current system is extremely work-intensive and creates a hugely disproportionate workload for teachers and co-ordinators.</i>	<i>Allowing more funding for students. Some of the criteria for funding is not flexible. I believe before SDR funding is allocated someone from the department should observe the student in the classroom so they can see first hand the adjustments that teachers are putting in place.</i>	<i>I believe the department can help parents, students in providing more inclusive funding for all students, as some schools children do not get the help they need because of a lack of funding.</i>

Source: KPMG

2.3.2 Forum findings

2.3.2.1 Funding and support

At the forums, parents of children with a diagnosed disability that received a higher level of support generally reported greater satisfaction with resourcing, particularly parents with children who had the support of a teacher assistant in the classroom. Many parents noted the difficulty accessing speech pathology services for their child, despite their views that speech pathology would benefit their child and enable them to participate more fully in their education.

As noted in section 2.2.2.2 parents at the forums reported that they did not feel like their child's school was an active partner with them in relation to seeking funding. It was suggested that schools

are not very knowledgeable about the different types of funding they can apply for, or assist parents to apply for. One parent stated, *'People need to know early on what is available to them'*.

Learning centre

A number of parents at the forums noted the value of a 'sensory room' or 'learning centre' that is a physical space and staffing resource designed to assist students with special learning requirements and children with disability. One parent described the success of a low stimulus environment with support staff to provide a guided and low stimulus start to the school day, with a positive impact to the student's experience for the day. Similarly parents noted the value of such a support for managing behavioural episodes and providing a learning environment that encouraged improved learning outcomes, and supporting the student to further participate and be part of their class room – socially and learning activities. The parent suggested that, *"for the first time in 8 years, he wants to come to school"*.

2.4 Learning and Professional Development

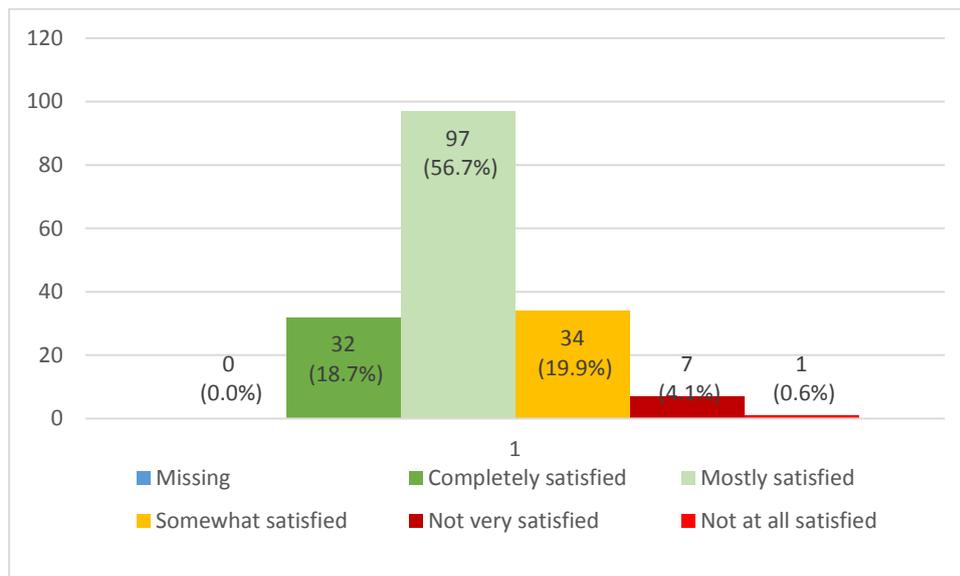
2.4.1 Survey findings – support teachers

The questions related to learning and professional development were only asked of support teachers. These questions, for obvious reasons, were not asked of parents via the survey. Nor was this topic explored at the forums. Principals and class teachers were asked questions related to the theme of teacher capability and support, which is explored in section 2.5. The three questions asked of support teachers were:

- To what extent are you satisfied that you have the skills needed to support staff in your school to work with students with disability?
- Which of the following areas would you like to focus on developing further expertise?
- Do you have any suggestions as to how your school or the Department could ensure that support teachers have the skills and expertise needed to support staff in their school to work with student with a disability?

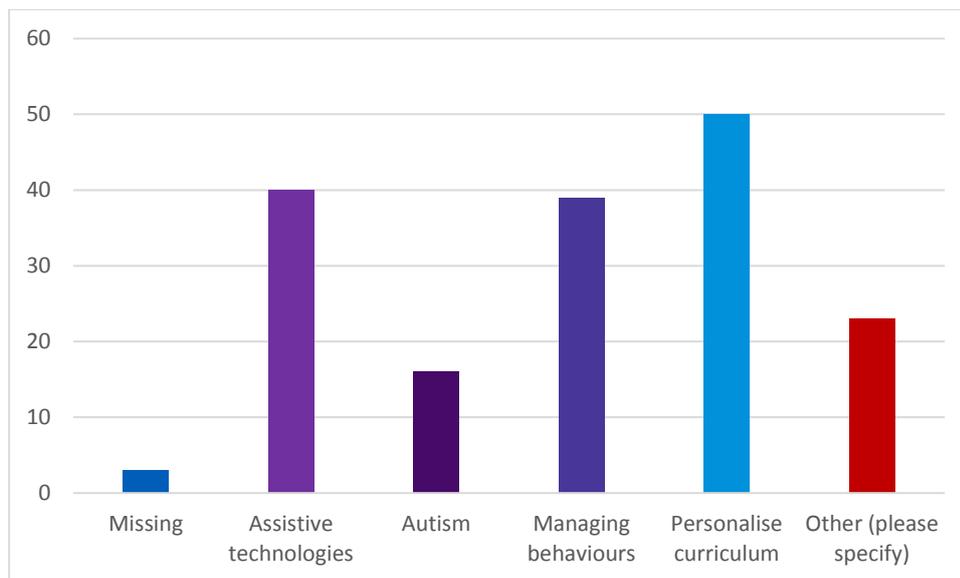
In relation to satisfaction with skills support the majority of support teachers were completely or mostly satisfied (75 per cent). There was a notable cohort that had lower levels of satisfaction. This cohort equates to one in four support teachers. This is outlined in Figure 7. The three preferred areas that support teachers would like to develop further expertise on is personalising the curriculum, managing challenging behaviours and assistive technologies. This is outlined in Figure 8.

Figure 7. To what extent are you satisfied that you have the skills needed to support staff in your school to work with students with disability? Support teacher survey



Source: KPMG

Figure 8. Which of the following areas would you like to focus on developing further expertise? Support teacher survey



Source: KPMG

There were a range of suggestions from support teachers. Some of the suggestions could be more readily influenced by the Department than others. For example some comments suggested additional

professional development and learning (and even specified the type) i.e. the Department has the capacity to amend the nature of professional development.

Table 8. Do you have any suggestions as to how your school or the Department could ensure that support teachers have the skills and expertise needed to support staff in their school to work with student with a disability?

Support Teacher Survey
<i>Additional professional learning from therapists - Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and Speech Language Pathologists, that is repeated annually to capture new Support Teachers and to 'refresh' learning for experienced Support Teachers.</i>
<i>PD options that support staff can attend. It is very challenging to find the time for PD in the mix of timetabling, classroom teaching and the necessity to have support staff in mainstream classrooms. It is often challenging to 'free' staff to attend the same PD sessions.</i>
<i>Ensuring that there are processes in place, whereby support teachers remain in the role for a specified time, at least two years. When the support teacher changes in a school often, consistence of procedures and expectations are not maintained.</i>
<i>In many schools this role needs to be fulltime to ensure the school, teachers and more importantly the students receive the best support necessary.</i>

Source: KPMG

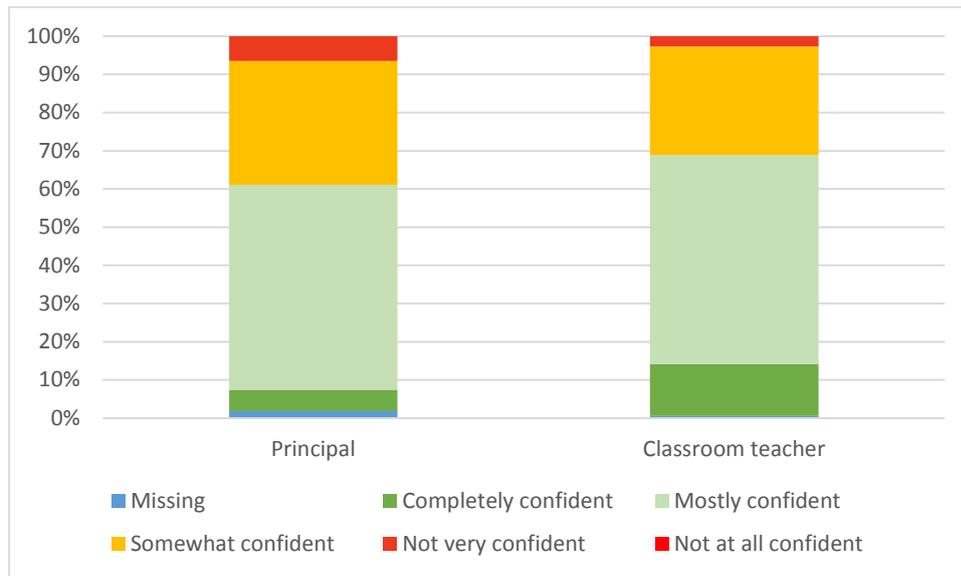
2.5 Teacher Capability and Support

2.5.1 Survey findings

The questions asked of principals and class room teachers related to teacher capability and support. One question was consistent across these two cohorts. The question asked principals, “How confident are you that all of your teachers have the skills they require to adequately support students with a disability in your school?” This was phrased slightly differently for classroom teachers. The distribution of responses is outlined below in Figure 9.

The distribution of responses between principals and classroom teachers is reasonably similar. Although a noticeable difference is that principals tend to be less confident (e.g. only 59 per cent are completely or mostly confident) than classroom teachers (68 per cent). The overall distribution pattern for classroom teachers itself suggests that there’s a sizeable cohort of teachers (i.e. the 28 per cent that are somewhat confident) that require some “up skilling” to adequately support students with a disability.

Figure 9. How confident are you that all of your teachers [principal survey] /you [class teacher survey] have the skills they require to adequately support students with a disability in your school?



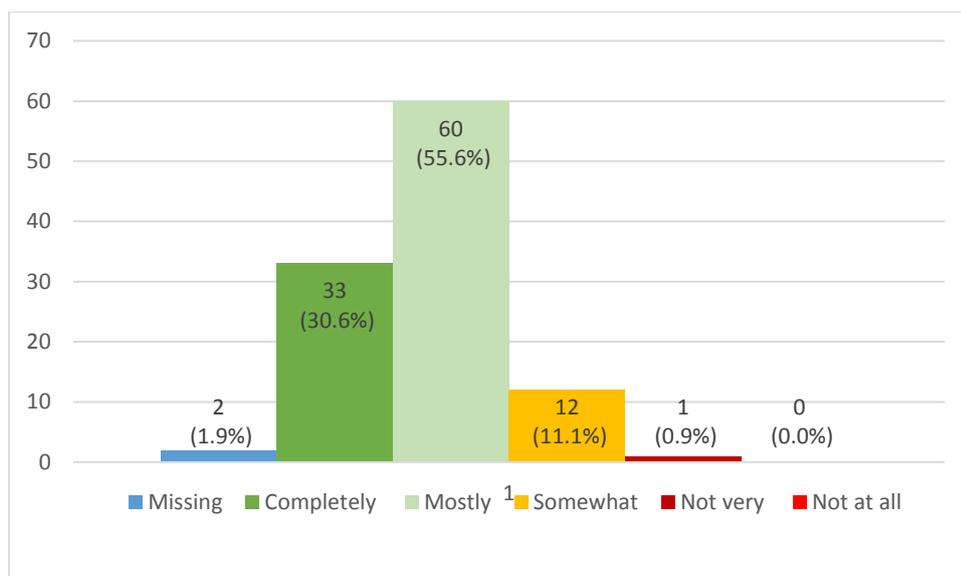
Source: KPMG

Principals were then asked:

- Do you feel you have managed to create a supportive environment for teachers who work with students with a disability?
- What steps have you taken to support your teachers to become inclusive practitioners?

For the first question the majority of principals thought that they had completely or mostly created a supportive environment for teachers who work with students with a disability (86 per cent). This is outlined in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Do you feel you have managed to create a supportive environment for teachers who work with students with a disability?



Source: KPMG

Principals provided a range of responses in relation to the steps they had taken to support their teachers to become more inclusive practitioners. Many responses cut across a range of actions or

steps, such as transition schedules, setting up teams, training materials and guides and professional learning. Some example responses are outlined in Table 9 below.

Table 9. What steps have you taken to support your teachers to become inclusive practitioners?

Principal Survey
<i>Significant transition schedules at the end of each year / TA consistency and timed rotations (teachers stable, TAs move & vice versa) / Teaching teams to work with sts (students)/ Keeping support teacher off class more (pay out of SRP)</i>
<i>PL / Assistant support / Advice from professionals / Visits to other schools</i>
<i>Ongoing PL on differentiation of the curriculum. PL on risk management, managing health issues, developing IEPs. Assistance in classroom (TAs and support teachers) and extra literacy support when required.</i>
<i>Kids Matters training / Intensive work around Respectful Schools documents / Respectful relationships training 2016 / School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Policy / Good teaching guides Differentiation embedded across whole school</i>

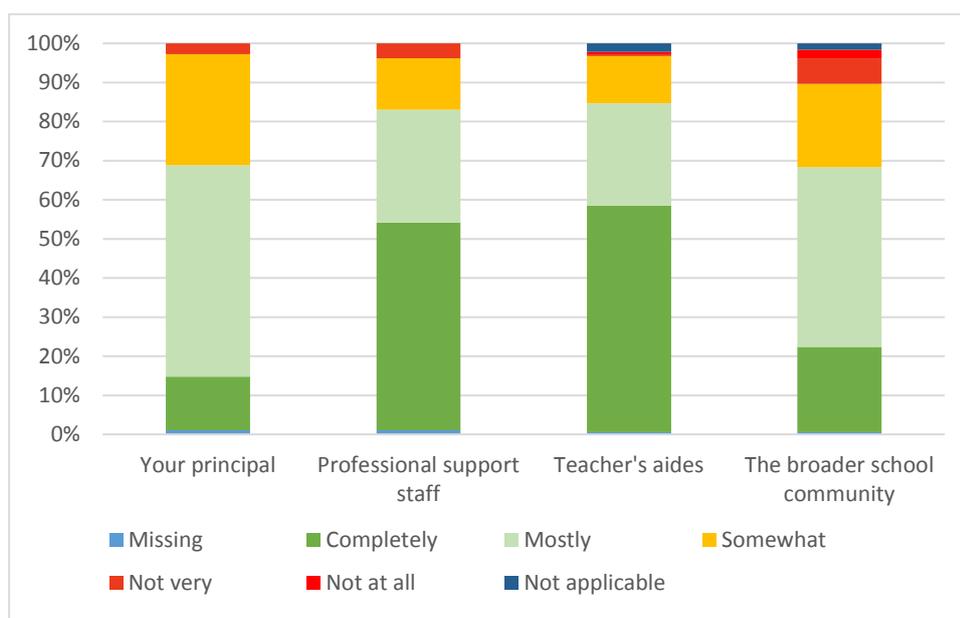
Source: KPMG

Classroom teachers were asked about the level of support they felt from different groups. Specifically they were asked "Do you feel you have the support in teaching students with a disability of:

- Your principal
- Professional support staff
- Teacher's assistants
- The broader school community

The majority of classroom teachers felt completely or mostly supported by professional support staff (82 per cent) and teacher's assistants (84 per cent). Classroom teachers tended to feel less supported by principals and the broader community – with only 68 per cent indicating they felt completely or mostly supported by principals and 68 per cent responded similarly in terms of support they felt from the broader school community. This is outlined in Figure 11 below. The most noticeable difference in the figure relates to the response around feeling "completely supported." Over half of class room teachers felt completely supported by teacher's assistants (58 per cent) and professional support staff (53 per cent). In contrast only 14 per cent of class room teachers responded that they felt completely supported by the principal.

Figure 11. Do you feel you have the support in teaching students with a disability of [the following groups]?



Source: KPMG

2.6 Other comments

The final three questions of the surveys were consistent for each of the four cohorts. They were

- What are the best aspects of how your school supports students with a disability? (Best aspects)
- What are the aspects that require the most improvement in terms of how your school supports students with a disability? (Most improvement)
- Do you have any other comments on your school and its approach to supporting and including students with a disability? (Other comments)

These free text questions were reasonably well responded to for each of the cohorts. As outlined in Table 10.

Table 10. Count of responses to the final three free text questions

Question	Principal survey	Class Teacher Survey	Support Teacher Survey	Parent Survey
Best aspects	100/108	146/183	151/171	86/113
Most improvement	95/108	130/183	141/171	80/113
Other comments	51/108	69/183	57/171	51/113

Source: KPMG

There were a range of detailed comments around the best aspects of how a school supports students with a disability. Many comments were quite positive and focussed on the inclusive environment of the school, the tailoring of IEPs/curriculum and partnerships with families. Some example comments are outlined in Table 11 below.

Table 11. What are the best aspects of how your school supports students with a disability?

Principal survey	Class Teacher Survey	Support Teacher Survey	Parent Survey
<i>Caring, professional staff and acceptance from other students.</i>	<i>All staff work together in supporting the needs of our students. Teams share resources made to support and ensure students have access to the curriculum and to learning.</i>	<i>Communication with parents is considered to be paramount. Interventions are well considered and effective.</i>	<i>Different methods are used in teaching - activities are carefully chosen to focus on key outcomes / Learning is made fun & practical</i>
<i>Integration/Inclusion / Celebration</i>	<i>Differentiated curriculum, working with parents</i>	<i>Family contact / learning goals / collaboration with colleagues</i>	<i>Inclusive, individual targeted learning plans with respect to child's extra needs and likes in conjunction with the teacher.</i>
<i>Our Teacher Assistants are terrific / Communication with Parents on a daily basis / Support team communicates with whole school</i>	<i>Differentiation / Inclusion / Adjustments / Communication with all parties</i>	<i>Inclusion and a differentiated program. Also being a small school where everyone is accepting of each other</i>	<i>My child is in Grade 6, the school is supporting him with transition into high school and are teaching him life skills which he will need into the future. They are using a hands on approach to teach him.</i>

Source: KPMG

There were a range of detailed comments around the aspects that require the most improvement in terms of how your school supports students with a disability. Many comments were related to access to professional support staff, communication between schools and parents and ongoing education. Some example comments are outlined in Table 12.

Table 12. What are the aspects that require the most improvement in terms of how your school supports students with a disability?

Principal survey	Class Teacher Survey	Support Teacher Survey	Parent Survey
<i>As a small school access to professional staff on a more timely basis. For example being able to complete an educational assessment within a month rather than waiting 6 weeks to the next scheduled visit to complete the assessment and another 6 weeks for the report.</i>	<i>Coordination of assistants and communication between teachers, parent/guardians and the students.</i>	<i>All teachers understanding that students don't always have a choice in the way they behave, especially students living with ASD.</i>	<i>Communication between support staff and parents can be improved.</i>

Principal survey	Class Teacher Survey	Support Teacher Survey	Parent Survey
<i>Can always work on best practice approaches in the classroom. This is always a working progress as we cater for different individuals each year.</i>	<i>Funding, support from Department, greater access to professional support staff</i>	<i>Breadth of knowledge among teaching staff about how to include all students</i>	<i>Educating the whole school about the elements of autism.</i>
<i>Continue to work to develop 'safe places' for students in classes, teaching of self calming techniques.</i>	<i>Making sure outcomes have been achieved with evidence</i>	<i>Continued focus on writing quality SMART goals and committing to the paper-work involved through developing their skills with SSS would be advantageous.</i>	<i>Making sure children are involved in additional activities offered by the school.</i>

Source: KPMG

There were less comments for the final question, which asked respondents if they had any other comments. Many comments were quite positive and pointed out that teaching staff and communities were doing the “best they can” with resources and competing priorities. Some comments related to cohorts of children that may require additional support or were comments stating that additional funding may be required. Some example comments are outlined in Table 13 below.

Table 13. Do you have any other comments on your school and its approach to supporting and including students with a disability?

Principal survey	Class Teacher Survey	Support Teacher Survey	Parent Survey
<i>Resources and funding for those not on SDR or 55-70</i>	<i>Great support team who are passionate about their role. Keep up the good work team.</i>	<i>I think we're doing a pretty good job and I feel supported in my role.</i>	<i>At times the organisation around my child is lacking and staff seem to be reactive rather than proactive.</i>
<i>The school is well on the way to support students with a disability, there is always scope and need to improve staff and community understanding.</i>	<i>I feel our school is very inclusive of students and we work with the families to best cater to their needs.</i>	<i>Leadership and support staff are doing a great job of implementing best practice strategies with positivity and flexibility.</i>	<i>I am, so far, extremely impressed in my first year with the school. I am grateful for the support and expertise of the staff and the attitudes and inclusive approach they take in educating kids with additional needs.</i>

Principal survey	Class Teacher Survey	Support Teacher Survey	Parent Survey
<i>we are doing the best we can with the time and physical and human resources available</i>	<i>I feel we are on the right path to supporting all students and families with a disability.</i>	<i>My principal is very supportive however there are always additional school matters that compete with the available time for supporting staff</i>	<i>I think our school is doing what they can but there is more that could be done to come in line with what other public and private schools provide.</i>

Source: KPMG

2.7 Other findings

2.7.1 Forum findings

Some parents who attended the forums suggested that parent forums be accompanied by other methods of gathering feedback, as some parents may not feel confident speaking in a group about their experiences, and/or may not have the resources to take time off work or organise child care. Parents also noted that the forums were a good way for parents to meet others in similar situations as them, and to learn and share information.

2.7.2 Survey findings

There were three main other survey findings. These other survey findings were

1. Robust response rates, particularly from support teachers
2. The volume and detail to the free text comment questions (i.e. respondents were engaged in completing the surveys); and
3. The slight disparity in the levels of satisfaction between principals and support teachers, class teachers and parents.

Robust survey response rates

The response rates across the four surveys was quite robust. For example there were 196 government schools that received the link and so the response rate across the principal cohort was 55 per cent (108/196). The number of support teachers in these government schools is approximately 200 and the response rate was approximately 86 per cent (171/200). This robust response rate from support teachers suggests that they might be a more appropriate channel for sending on surveys to classroom teachers and parents rather than principals. It is noted that the survey for support teachers was promoted by the Department at a face to face forum. This aspect is explored further in section 3.2.

Calculating a response rate for classroom teachers and parents is slightly more difficult. While the number of classroom teachers in government schools is known, not all of them were invited to participate. Further it is not known how many of those classroom teachers are regularly interacting with students with a disability. Similarly while the number of students on the SDR is known 1,036 (and thus the number of parents and guardians is, at a minimum equivalent to this figure) it is not known how many parents received a direct invite to complete the survey. Nor is it known how many may have seen the departmental promotion of the survey.

Free text commentary

Throughout the four surveys there were a number of free text questions. For example in the principal survey there were eight free text questions. For these eight free text questions the majority of principals provided a response. The responses provided were quite detailed. This pattern was

repeated across the classroom teacher and support teacher surveys, although to a slightly lesser extent. The free text questions didn't have a similar volume of response from parents however the comments that parents did provide were generally constructive and detailed.

Levels of satisfaction variation

The pattern of principals having the highest levels of "satisfaction" amongst the four cohorts is consistent across the scaled style questions. That is to say that for the scaled style questions principals consistently had the highest proportion of respondents with positive viewpoints. Those questions were:

- Overall, how inclusive do you feel your school is for students with a disability (see Figure 1)
- How satisfied are you that parents or guardians of students with a disability at your school are appropriately involved in Educational goal setting/planning for their child (see Figure 2 and Figure 3)
- To what extent are you satisfied that your school is able to provide reasonable adjustments needed to cater for students with disability (see Figure 5).

3 Considerations for future engagement

This section summarises learnings from the conduct of this first round of engagement and suggested areas for consideration in future iterations of engagement for the parent forums and the promotion and conduct of surveys. The section presents a summary related to parent forums and the surveys.

3.1 Surveys

There was a relatively tight timeframe to design, pilot, distribute and follow up the cohorts surveyed. During the piloting phase principals were the key conduit for forwarding on the surveys to classroom teachers and parents. During the pilot phase no issues were raised by the three principals that piloted the survey that this would be difficult.

In reviewing response rates and survey findings, KPMG and the Department discussed using support teachers as the conduit for distributing surveys to classroom teachers and to parents. This may be worth considering for future survey engagement. There are several reasons for using this approach:

- support teachers had a high response rate (reflective of the nature of the support teacher role and focus on students with disability as their primary focus)
- principals may be busier and in receipt of several survey invitations
- support teachers may have a closer connection to the classroom teacher and parents of students with a disability.

In addition a targeted response rate process may assist in increasing response rates from principals and class room teachers. This approach would allow for direct follow up of those classroom teachers and principals that are yet to respond rather than a reminder email to all contacts.

The timeframe for responding to the surveys was appropriate. Across the four surveys three to four weeks was set aside for respondents to complete the survey. Despite competing demands at the time of year (late October/November/early December) response rates were quite high. However there is room for improvement, particularly from principals. There were some parents who attended the parent forums that were not aware of the parent survey and requested a link be sent to them directly. This suggests additional promotion and awareness of the parent survey may be worth exploring for future surveys to enhance parent survey responses.

3.2 Parent forums

As described in section 1.3.2.2 parent forums were not at capacity and for some forums there were no attendees. Based on internal discussion with the Department and suggestions provided by parents that attended these forums, the following observations and areas for consideration are highlighted:

- Time of day for forums - Parents valued having the options of having an in-school hours forum (1.30pm to 3.00pm) and an after hours forum (6.00pm to 7.30pm) in each region of the state.
- Lead time to forum - A substantially longer lead time for promoting the forums was suggested. Lead times suggested were two weeks, a month (four weeks) and for the forum times to be set at the start of the year (i.e. part of the calendar).
- Time of year – Parents that attended the forums were pleased that there would be future opportunities to attend similar forums. The timing of November was generally thought to be a reasonable time of year, providing a perspective/ assessment of the current school year.
- Promotion of the parent forums – a multi-channel approach to promoting and advertising the forums was suggested to best reach the widest potential audience.
- Location of the forums – forums were conducted in the northwest, north and south of the state at a mix of primary and high schools, with the intention that in subsequent years the forums would be held at a cross section of schools to encourage a diversity of parent participation. An online forum via skype was also suggested by a parent to supplement the face to face forums.

Appendix A: Survey findings

Please find survey findings presented in the following MS Excel files:

A.1 Principal survey

Appendix A.1_Principal Survey Results

A.2 Class teacher survey

Appendix A.2: Class Teacher Survey Results

A.3 Support teacher survey

Appendix A.3_Support Teacher Survey Results

A.4 Parent survey

Appendix A.4: Parent Survey Results

Appendix B: Survey questionnaires

B.1 Principal Survey

B.1.1 Demographic Questions

1. Please select your school:

[Dropdown list]

B.1.2 Inclusiveness at your school

2. Overall, how inclusive do you feel your school's culture is for students with a disability?

[Completely inclusive, mostly inclusive, somewhat inclusive, not very inclusive, not at all inclusive]

3. What **processes or procedures** do you have in place at your school to support students with a disability?
4. What approaches/structures do you have in place at a school-wide level to support students with disabilities?

B.1.3 Partnerships with families

5. How satisfied are you that parents or guardians of students with a disability at your school are appropriately involved in:
 - a. Educational goal setting for their child
 - b. Educational planning for their child

[Completely satisfied, mostly satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, not at all satisfied]

6. How often are parents or guardians of students with a disability involved in goal setting and planning at your school?

[Always, often, sometimes, rarely, never]

7. Do you have any suggestions on how parents or guardians of students with a disability could be better involved in goal setting and/or planning for their child?

B.1.4 Resourcing

8. To what extent are you satisfied that your school is able to provide reasonable adjustments needed to cater for students with disability?

[Completely, mostly, somewhat, not very, not at all, unsure]

9. Please select **three adjustments or supports** from the list below that you feel would have the greatest impact on your school's ability to cater for students with a disability:

[Improving physical access to buildings/facilities, modifying programs and adapting curriculum delivery and assessment strategies, professional learning and training for staff, specialised technology or computer software or equipment, provision of study notes or research materials in different formats, services such as sign language interpreters, visiting school teams or specialised support staff, additional personnel such as tutors or assistants for personal care or mobility assistance, other (please specify)]

10. Do you have any suggestions as to how **the Department** may be able to ensure that reasonable adjustments needed for students with a disability can be made?

B.1.5 Teacher capability and support

11. How confident are you that all of your teachers have the skills they require to adequately support students with a disability in your school?

[Completely confident, mostly confident, somewhat confident, not very confident, not at all confident]

12. Do you feel you have managed to create a supportive environment for teachers who work with students with a disability?

[Completely, mostly, somewhat, not very, not at all]

13. What steps have you taken to support your teachers to become inclusive practitioners?

B.1.6 Other comments

14. What are the best aspects of how your school supports students with a disability?
15. What are the aspects that require the most improvement in terms of how your school supports students with a disability?
16. Do you have any other comments on your school and its approach to supporting and including students with a disability?

B.2 Classroom Teacher Survey

B.2.1 Demographic Questions

1. Please select your school from the list below.

[Dropdown list]

2. How many students with a disability are you actively involved in teaching?

B.2.2 Inclusiveness

3. Overall, how inclusive do you feel your school culture is for students with a disability?

[Completely inclusive, mostly inclusive, somewhat inclusive, not very inclusive, not at all inclusive]

4. To what extent do you feel able to cater for students with a disability by:

- a. Personalising the curriculum to meet their learning needs?
- b. Differentiating the curriculum to an appropriate level?

[Completely, mostly, somewhat, not very, not at all]

5. Do you have any suggestions on how your school could be more inclusive for students with a disability? Please describe

B.2.3 Partnerships with families

6. How satisfied are you that parents or guardians of students with a disability at your school are appropriately involved in:
 - a. Educational goal setting for their child
 - b. Educational planning for their child

[Completely satisfied, mostly satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, not at all satisfied]

7. How often are parents or guardians of students with a disability involved in goal setting and planning at your school?

[Always, often, sometimes, rarely, never]

8. Do you have any suggestions on how parents or guardians of students with a disability could be better involved in goal setting and or planning for their child?

B.2.4 Resourcing

9. To what extent are you satisfied that your school is able to provide reasonable adjustments needed to cater for students with disability?

[Completely, mostly, somewhat, not very, not at all, unsure]

10. Please select **three adjustments or supports** from the list below that you feel would have the greatest impact on your school's ability to cater for students with a disability:

[Improving physical access to buildings/facilities, modifying programs and adapting curriculum delivery and assessment strategies, professional learning and training for staff, specialised technology or computer software or equipment, provision of study notes or research materials in different formats, services such as sign language interpreters, visiting school teams or specialised support staff, additional personnel such as tutors or assistants for personal care or mobility assistance, other (please specify)]

11. Do you have any suggestions as to how the Department may be able to ensure that reasonable adjustments needed for students with a disability can be made? Please describe

B.2.5 Support for Teachers

12. How confident are you that you have the skills and expertise you require to adequately support students with a disability in your class?

[Completely, mostly, somewhat, not very, not at all]

13. Do you feel you have the support in teaching students with a disability of:
 - a. Your principal
 - b. Professional support staff
 - c. Teacher's assistants

- d. The broader school community

[Completely, mostly, somewhat, not very, not at all]

B.2.6 Other comments

14. What are the best aspects of how your school supports students with a disability?
15. What are the aspects that require the most improvement in terms of how your school supports students with a disability?
16. Do you have any other comments on your school and its approach to supporting and including students with a disability?

B.3 Support Teacher Survey

B.3.1 Demographic Questions

1. What is the name of your school?
2. How many students with a disability do you support?

B.3.2 Your role as a support teacher

3. To what extent are you involved in the following activities for students with a disability?
 - a. Differentiating curriculum
 - b. Developing Individual Education Plans
 - c. Utilising assistive technology
 - d. Leading professional learning in your school
 - e. Meeting DSE obligations
 - f. Liaising with other professional support staff

[Extremely involved, very involved, somewhat involved, not very involved, not at all involved]

B.3.3 Inclusiveness

4. Do you feel that your school's **processes** support a culture of inclusion for students with a disability, specifically how satisfied are you that:
 - a. Methods of communication are appropriately tailored for students with a disability?
 - b. Your school is appropriately flexible when supporting students with a disability?

[Completely, mostly, somewhat, not really, not at all]

5. Do you feel that your school's **leadership** (i.e. principal and other senior members of staff) are supportive of inclusive practice for students with a disability?

[Completely supportive, mostly supportive, somewhat supportive, not very supportive, not at all supportive]

6. Overall, how inclusive do you feel your school is for students with a disability?

[Completely inclusive, mostly inclusive, somewhat inclusive, not very inclusive, not at all inclusive]

7. Do you have any suggestions on how your school could be more inclusive for students with a disability?

B.3.4 Partnerships with families

8. How satisfied are you that parents or guardians of students with a disability at your school are appropriately involved in:
- Educational goal setting for their child
 - Educational planning for their child

[Completely satisfied, mostly satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, not at all satisfied]

9. Do you have any suggestions on how parents or guardians of students with a disability could be better involved in goal setting and/or planning for their child?

B.3.5 Resourcing

10. To what extent are you satisfied that your school is able to provide reasonable adjustments needed to cater for students with disability?

[Completely satisfied, mostly satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, not at all satisfied]

11. Please select **three adjustments or supports** from the list below that you feel would have the greatest impact on your school's ability to cater for students with a disability:

[Improving physical access to buildings/facilities, modifying programs and adapting curriculum delivery and assessment strategies, professional learning and training for staff, specialised technology or computer software or equipment, provision of study notes or research materials in different formats, services such as sign language interpreters, visiting school teams or specialised support staff, additional personnel such as tutors or assistants for personal care or mobility assistance, other (please specify)]

12. Do you have any suggestions as to how the **Department** could ensure that reasonable adjustments needed for students with a disability can be made?

B.3.6 Learning and Professional Development

13. To what extent are you satisfied that you have the skills needed to support staff in your school to work with students with disability?

[Completely satisfied, mostly satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, not at all satisfied]

14. Which of the following areas would you like to focus on developing further expertise?

[Autism, Personalisation/differentiation of curriculum, Managing challenging behaviours, Assistive technologies, Other (please specify)]

15. Do you have any suggestions as to how your school or the Department could ensure that support teachers have the skills and expertise needed to support staff in their school to work with student with a disability?

B.3.7 Other comments

16. What are the best aspects of how your school supports students with a disability?
17. What are the aspects that require the most improvement in terms of how your school supports students with a disability?
18. Do you have any other comments on your school and its approach to supporting and including students with a disability?

B.4 Parent Survey

B.4.1 Demographic questions

1. Please select the school your child attends.

[Dropdown list]

2. What year level is your child in?
3. Is your child supported through targeted funding or receiving specific supports at school? For example are they supported via additional disability funding, teacher assistant support or help from a specialist staff member.

[Yes, No, Unsure]

4. What is the enrolment status of your child?

[Full time, part-time, dual enrolment]

B.4.2 Inclusiveness at your school

5. To what extent are you satisfied that your child is:
 - a. Supported by their teacher(s)
 - b. Appropriately supported by the school's leadership

[Completely, mostly, somewhat, not very, not at all]

6. Are you satisfied that your child had access to all areas of school life, i.e. both the learning and social aspects of school

[Completely, mostly, somewhat, not very, not at all]

7. Overall, how inclusive do you feel your school's culture is for students with a disability?

[Completely inclusive, mostly inclusive, somewhat inclusive, not very inclusive, not at all inclusive]

8. Do you have any suggestions on how your school could be more inclusive for your child?

B.4.3 Partnerships with families

9. How satisfied are you with the level of your involvement in
 - a. Educational goal setting for their child
 - b. Educational planning for their child

[Completely satisfied, mostly satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, not at all satisfied]

10. Do you have any suggestions on how your school could better involve you in goal setting and/or planning for your child?

B.4.4 Resourcing

11. To what extent are you satisfied that your school is providing reasonable adjustments needed to cater for your child

[Completely, mostly, somewhat, not very, not at all, unsure]

12. Please select **three adjustments or supports** from the list below that you feel would have the greatest impact on your school's ability to cater for students with a disability:

[Improving physical access to buildings/facilities, modifying programs and adapting curriculum delivery and assessment strategies, professional learning and training for staff, specialised technology or computer software or equipment, provision of study notes or research materials in different formats, services such as sign language interpreters, visiting school teams or specialised support staff, additional personnel such as tutors or assistants for personal care or mobility assistance, other (please specify)]

13. Do you have any suggestions as to how your school or the Department may be able to ensure that reasonable adjustments needed for students with a disability can be made? Please describe

B.4.5 Other comments

14. What are the best aspects of how your school supports students with a disability?
15. What are the aspects that require the most improvement in terms of how your child's school supports students with a disability?
16. Do you have any other comments on your school and its approach to supporting and including students with a disability?

Appendix C: Consultation forum materials

C.1 Consultation forums – Parents of Students with Disability

Introduction

In August 2015, the Ministerial Taskforce Report *Improved Support For Students with Disability* was released. The Taskforce identified a range of barriers that affect the engagement of students with a disability in mainstream education. The Taskforce made recommendations designed to achieve a more inclusive education experience for Tasmanian students with a disability.

To inform and support the implementation of the Taskforce's recommendations, the Department of Education (the 'Department') is seeking to establish a basis for understanding and measuring the views of parents of students with a disability, principals, support teachers and a select group of class teachers from Tasmanian Government schools.

To do this the Department have engaged KPMG to conduct a range of surveys of parents of students with a disability, principals, support teachers and a select group of class teachers. The surveys will be conducted on an annual basis to allow for ongoing measurement and progress against the Taskforce's recommendations.

Consultations

In addition to the surveys, a number of consultation forums are being held across the state to hear the perspectives of parents of students with disability. These forums will seek to explore parent's perspectives of:

- **Current good practice** – positive experiences and engagement of students with a disability in mainstream education (what's working well, what would you like to see more of?)
- **Gaps in current practice** – what do you see that could be improved or changed to improve engagement of students with disability? What could be changed to achieve a more inclusive education experience for Tasmanian students with a disability?

The forums will focus on:

- Inclusivity of schools (level of teacher support, access to all areas of school life) ,
- Opportunities for you (parents) to be involved in your child's education (goal setting and planning).

The forums are to be held in Burnie, Devonport, Launceston and Hobart during the weeks of 14 and 21 November 2016. We want to hear of experiences and what can be improved.

If you are unable to attend one of the forums but would like to have your say please contact Edward Swan (eswan@kpmg.com.au or 03 6230 4095) and we can arrange a time for a short (30mins) telephone consultation at a convenient time.

For further information please contact:

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- Verity Nicholson, Department of Education verity.nicholson@education.tas.gov.au | 03 6165 6119.



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