

Give parents and students a voice in disability-funding accountability

The data that decides how disability funding flows relies largely on schools reporting on themselves. Build parent and student voice into the check, and independently audit whether the funded support reaches the child.

 Evidence brief for members of parliament  July 2026 · sources verified

WHAT WE'RE ASKING FOR

- ✓ Include parent and student feedback in the accountability measures for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD).
- ✓ Use this feedback as independent evidence, in the audits already underway, of whether supports and adjustments actually reached students, whether there was genuine collaboration with parents, and whether adjustments were appropriate and effective.
- ✓ Make outcomes for students with disability transparent and publicly reported.

Why it matters

The NCCD determines how disability funding flows to schools, yet it relies largely on schools reporting on themselves — Schools are asked to document that they consulted parents, but that record is the school's own — there is no independent parent or student verification of whether the funded support actually reaches the child. When the people who see the support (or its absence) most clearly have no independent voice in the data, the gaps stay invisible.

How the money flows — and what's actually checked

The NCCD is the dataset that decides how much disability funding a school receives. Here is the path from a teacher's classroom judgement to dollars — and where the check is missing.

1

Schools collect NCCD data — once a year

For each student receiving adjustments for disability, the school records the **level of adjustment** and a **category of disability** (physical, cognitive, sensory or social/emotional). It rests on teacher judgement and evidence held at the school.



2

Four levels of adjustment are recorded

QDTP — no loading

Supplementary

Substantial

Extensive

Only the top three levels attract funding, and the amount rises with the level.



3

NCCD sets the “student with disability loading”

Since 2018, these counts feed the disability loading inside the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) — the Commonwealth's funding benchmark for every school.



4

The Australian Government pays recurrent funding

Funding flows to state & territory governments (for government schools) and to approved authorities/systems (for Catholic and Independent schools), who pass it on to schools.



5

Schools provide the adjustments

The funding is meant to pay for the supports each student needs to access education on the same basis as their peers.

⚠ Where's the check?

The data is largely **school self-reported**. The NCCD does ask schools to **consult parents and keep notes of it** — but that is the school's *own* record (parental consent isn't required), and verification happens through **after-the-fact reviews of the school's documentation**. Where a school can't substantiate its claims, funding is clawed back. What's missing is **independent** confirmation from the people who can see whether support actually reaches the child — parents and students. That is the gap this reform closes.

The evidence — who has already called for this

This reform is not a fringe idea. It is documented in government inquiries, audits and royal-commission findings, and championed by peak advocacy bodies. Every quote below links to its original source so you can read it in context.

RECENT AUDIT · 2025

"The federal government is on track to recoup more than \$18 million from private schools wrongly spending disability funds."

Federal disability-funding recovery, reported November 2025. The *Daily Telegraph* reported 63 NSW private schools were required to repay; the private-school disability budget tripled from \$674m (2014) to \$2.4b (2024). Money is recovered *after* the fact, when schools cannot substantiate their NCCD claims. [Daily Telegraph →](#)
[Education Review report →](#)

NSW AUDITOR-GENERAL · 2024

"The Department does not know how effectively it is meeting the needs of students with disability because it has not consistently monitored outcomes for students with disability or schools' inclusive education practices."

Supporting Students with Disability (Performance Audit), Audit Office of NSW, 2024.
[Read the audit →](#)

PEAK BODY · CYDA

"Better data to track real progress."

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA), "Demand Action on Inclusive Education" — calling for better data and accountability. [See the campaign →](#)

NATIONAL DATA · CYDA 2026

"National data does not reflect rates of enrolment refusal, shortened school days, modified timetables, withdrawal from activities, or informal exclusions — even though this is commonly reported by families."

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA), *Snapshot of children and young people with disability in Australia* (Key statistics report, March 2026).

Disability data is also collected differently across the NCCD, ABS and Census, making it hard to track students or verify outcomes — exactly the accountability gap that parent and student voice would close. [Read the report →](#)

INCLUSIVE-ED COALITION · ACIE

"National data are collected on the experience of students with disability in inclusive education (or not) from existing and new sources across a range of data points."

Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education (ACIE), *Driving Change: A roadmap for achieving inclusive education in Australia*. [See the roadmap →](#)

NSW CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE · ACYP 2024

"Just because you're in a support unit does not mean that you don't have a voice."

A young person, quoted in the ACYP submission, Advocate for Children and Young People (NSW), submission to the 2024 NSW parliamentary inquiry (drawing on consultations with 370+ young people). ACYP recommends the Department's outcomes Progress Report "feature feedback from children and young people with disability sourced through direct consultations" (p.14) — the student voice this reform builds into the check. [Read the submission →](#)

THE TOOL ITSELF · NCCD

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD).

The official annual dataset that drives disability funding — the natural place to build in parent and student voice. [About the NCCD →](#)

At a glance — who has already called for this reform

Each ● marks a report, inquiry or body that has called for this reform. The full grid for all four priorities is on the Helen's Way Reform Agenda page.

GOVERNMENT REPORTS & INQUIRIES



NSW Report 37
(2017)



NSW Report 52
(2024)



Auditor-General — Supporting Students
(2024)



Disability Royal Commission
(2023)

PEAK & ADVOCACY BODIES



ACIE



CYDA



Family
Advocacy



Centre for Inclusive Education
(QUT)

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Support building genuine parent and student feedback into NCCD accountability measures.

Call for an independent audit of disability funding and public reporting of outcomes for students with disability.

Raise these audit findings with your state or federal education minister.

The gap is officially documented: the NSW Auditor-General found the Department cannot show whether it is meeting these students' needs. Parent and student voice is the missing verification.

See the full picture on our [Reform Agenda](#) and [Resources](#) pages.

