Our specialist schools and settings have developed deep knowledge and understanding of learners with additional learning and support needs. Expertise in specific areas of learning and support for students with disability are often intensive and focused in these specialist settings.

We need to strengthen opportunities for schools with specialist expertise to collaborate, develop and share their knowledge more widely across the school system and between special and mainstream schools.

What we will build on

- 106 special schools and their teaching and support staff who provide educational services to students in specialist settings.
- the knowledge, expertise and specialist resources available in our special schools supporting students with intellectual disability, mental health and behaviour needs, and students in hospital.

What we will do now

We will develop networks across schools to share the knowledge, expertise and specialist resources available or developed in NSW public special schools.

We will do this by funding our special schools to undertake locally designed projects in the following areas of priority need:

- Assistive or augmentative technology and software as a vehicle for students to access the curriculum
- Case management of students with high and complex support needs in health and/or behaviour (including mental health) and collaborative interagency practice to support students and their teachers.
- The provision of support and adjustments to learning programs to allow students whose communication delay or disability prevents them from accessing regular curriculum outcomes.
- Supporting transition needs of students with disabilities, including preparation, transfer, induction and consolidation of student’s access and engagement in education.
- Building learning and support plans through collaborative parent and community partnerships.

Each local project will incorporate a networking strategy integral to its implementation to build and share knowledge and expertise across schools. Networking strategies will be integrated across schools within their region.

Peer support groups comprising principals from intellectual disability, mental health/behaviour and hospital school settings, together with academic contributors, will support the development of high quality projects and outcomes.

This will result in:

- Effective practice in supporting successful outcomes for students with disability being identified and shared across our system.
- More schools being informed by the expertise and resources developed in specialist settings.
- More students benefitting from teachers’ access to expertise available in our specialist schools.

Further information

www.det.nsw.edu.au/ every-student-every-school