

Attention: The Hon Mr James Merlino
Minister for Education
Victorian Government
Email: james.merlino@parliament.vic.gov.au

24 March 2020

Dear Minister Merlino,

Re: IQ Testing for Students with Disabilities

We write to you regarding the guidance notes for psychologists undertaking IQ testing for students with disabilities in Victorian schools.

We understand that in 2017, the Department of Education and Training provided some updated guidance notes for psychologists that encourage them, but do not require them, to use alternative testing to the WISC IQ assessment when students have Severe Language Disorders.

Using regular IQ assessments provides incorrect scoring for students whose ability to use language negatively affects their testing. This has resulted in, and continues to result in, students who do not have intellectual disabilities being incorrectly placed in segregated schools for children with intellectual disabilities. Such placements are entirely inappropriate for students who do not have intellectual disabilities, and do not allow those students to reach their educational potential and gain the skills they need to be included successfully in society for the rest of their lives, as committed to by the Department of Education and Training.

Expecting students with disabilities with severe language disorders to comply with the WISC and other assessments that rely on language to inform IQ, could be seen to be a breach of discrimination legislation.

As the WISC continues to be used by Assessments Australia for students with severe language disorders, we are asking you to require the Department of Education and Training to replace the current guidelines with mandatory requirements for the IQ testing of students with severe language disorders or high communication support needs.

We look forward to receiving your positive response to our urgent request as soon as possible.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karryn Goode', written in a cursive style.

Karryn Goode, Chairperson Disability Advocacy Victoria Inc.