The School Learning Support Team
The school’s learning support team will play a vital role in the implementation of the School Learning Support Program at the school level. Planning and coordination of programs that provide support for students with additional learning needs is a key responsibility of principals and the school learning support team.

Students with lower level support needs may demonstrate need in one or more basic areas of learning. The school’s learning support team will need to consider the needs of the individual student when allocating teacher time and funding support. The school’s learning support team may decide to provide initial assistance at a more intensive level and reduce support as a student gains skills and independence.

Funding
Funding from the School Learning Support Program is targeted to support students with lower level support needs without the requirement for a disability confirmation. It is supplementary to existing school resources and other targeted funding received by the school. Principals have the responsibility for determining the most appropriate ways of using the total annual funding to support students with additional learning needs and their class teachers.

Parental Involvement
The Department of Education and Training supports the meaningful participation of parents and carers in the education of their children. Parents and carers are an integral part of the school’s learning support team. The process of identifying student support needs and monitoring progress through a learning support team structure is recognition of the Department’s commitment in this regard.

Increasing Expertise of Teachers
The School Learning Support Program includes targeted training in the areas of autism, behaviour, motor coordination, speech and language and communication, and curriculum access for students with additional learning needs. This training will be delivered through online modes to staff in groups of 10-12, with trained tutors who provide support online and direct ‘face to face’ sessions.

School Learning Support Teachers, School Learning Support Officers and class teachers will have access to this training.

In addition, a two day induction program for School Learning Support Teachers will be conducted in venues across the region during weeks 1, 2 & 3 of term 2.

Consultation and Evaluation
During the trial a working party comprised of key stakeholder groups will continue to develop aspects of the model and make recommendations to a state reference group. In addition a rigorous external evaluation of the trial and the program will be conducted during terms 2 and 3, 2010. The results of this evaluation will also inform the development of any changes considered for the future.

If you would like any further information in relation to the School Learning Support Program please contact the principal at your local school.

School Learning Support Program
Trial in the Illawarra and South East Region
The purpose of the program is to:
- Better support students with additional learning needs
- Build the capacity of staff
- Strengthen cooperation between schools to respond to local need
- Deliver an equitable allocation of resources
- Allocate resources for schools to use flexibly to meet the needs of students.

The trial of the program in Illawarra and South East Region will enable principals, staff and parents to provide feedback about this new model of support to further inform the Department’s thinking about this important area of special education support.
The Model

The School Learning Support Program will establish a specialist teacher presence in 221 regular schools in Illawarra and South East Region to support students with additional learning needs and their class teachers. This has been achieved by merging some existing programs and allocating these positions directly to schools.

Funding has been provided to schools to assist students with lower level support needs without the requirement for a disability confirmation. The School Learning Support Program draws together existing funding allocated to the Learning Assistance Program and a portion of funding from the Integration, Funding Support Program.

The program aims to provide an equitable and transparent process for allocating specialist teacher positions and funding to schools. Principals, together with their school’s learning support team, will have increased flexibility to utilise these resources to best meet the needs of students.

More immediate support

The School Learning Support Program will make assistance for students and their class teachers more immediately available by allocating resources directly to each school. The administrative requirements for schools and teachers to get the help they need has been greatly reduced.

School Learning Support Teachers, School Learning Support Officers and Assistant Principals Learning Support have a critical role in supporting class teachers and schools to meet the diverse needs of students.

School Learning Support Teachers*

School Learning Support Teachers will provide direct and timely assistance to students in regular classes with additional learning needs from diverse cultural, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds and their teachers. They will plan, implement, monitor and evaluate teaching programs for students with additional learning needs in conjunction with regular classroom teachers, and provide advice and assistance to the school’s learning support team.

School Learning Support Officers*

Under the supervision and direction of a teacher a School Learning Support Officer is responsible to the principal or the supervisor for providing assistance with school routines, classroom activities and the care and management of students with disabilities and behaviour disorders.

Assistant Principals Learning Support*

Professional advice and assistance to schools across the region will be provided by Assistant Principals Learning Support. They will facilitate access for School Learning Support Teachers and communities of schools to skills training, current research and educational technology and will liaise with regional specialist personnel to ensure coordinated delivery of support for students with additional learning needs.