**Every student with disability succeeding vignette transcript –**

**Farnborough State School - Parent engagement**

- My name is Ross Deards. I'm the Acting Principal here at Farnborough State School. When I arrived at Farnborough State School, it was very clear that there was a very inclusive approach that surrounded the whole school. It's a small community school, whereby the parents in the community have a very active role across the school and that has then rolled into how students with diverse needs are placed in classrooms etc., and how the support that they're given happens on a day-to-day basis. The teachers have very good access to parents and there's a lot of discussion pre them arriving in the classroom, which helps. Just build our knowledge of what's best going to work for the children and it works, it works. The kids are happy when they're in classrooms. Kids are happy when they're learning together with their peers and that's what we're after.

- My role as the Special Education Teacher here at Farnborough State School is that I am the Case Manager for the students with disabilities that we have here at Farnborough. So what that process entails is consulting with both the parents and the teachers, and working as a team to create a plan that is inclusive for the child here at school. So what that looks like on a day-to-day basis in the classroom, in the school environment can be varied depending on which child it is and what their needs are.

- The job's very much about relationships and it's important to develop those relationships with parents and families early on and to maintain those relationships throughout the school process. That way if there's any discussion or problems that arise during their schooling, that we're able to have an open and honest conversation with families.

- Over the long time that I've been at the school, I've had time to develop the relationships with the parents that we have here of the students with disabilities and we work together to talk about concerns and talk about strategies to meet their needs in this environment.

 - My name's Anita and I'm a mum to three daughters. My youngest is Analise and she's in Grade Four here at Farnborough. Analise was diagnosed at young age with high-functioning autism. She has a huge presentation of anxiety and as well as a few processing difficulties. Coming to school, we have periods that are absolutely wonderful and then we have had periods of high anxiety where it's been a little bit more difficult to get her to come along, but she absolutely adores coming to school. We've just had real, probably, two years of an amazing run where she's growing exponentially. Loves coming to school, loves her teachers, loves her peers as well and is really finding her own, which is all we want as a parent. The teaching staff here see her, they know her and they see her. And that's the same with all children, not just her. They're not just another student in the class, they're a voice and a personality and she has these amazing strengths that are drawn out.

So a real nurturing and loving environment is what she's provided with, probably first and foremost before the education. I suppose when you're comfortable, you can thrive in an environment. I suppose one of the things that I'm coming to learn with girls on the spectrum is that importance of really knowing who they are because they're so good at masking. So on the outside to so many people, she's holding it together, but these teachers and this support staff can see her, they can take one look at her and look at her body language and actually know where she's at. So, they're there for her.

With Analise being in class with her peers, it's wonderful. She has a support network of other children who know Analise to be Analise. She has formed some special friendships. They're mates who are keeping an eye out for another mate. So she's got a beautiful network of other children around her, incredibly supportive. As a family, we're really included in Analise's support, her structure with regards to extra assistance, with program decisions that need to be made. We're included in all of that and we're always part of the decision process. I personally feel that children and I throw around the word disability, but these children have such potential. We all do, every child does. And to be part of an inclusive environment where you're not stood out as being different, but you're being included. It's the perfect nourishment for these children to be able to thrive.

- My name is Allison, my daughter is Mia. She's in Year Five here at Farnborough State School. Farnborough State School has been an amazing school for Mia. We've only relocated here at the end of last term. Since Mia's been here she's had 100% attendance, which is the first time in her schooling years that she's ever attended a school for 100% throughout her term. When we first came to Farnborough, they included her in everything. There was no label on her forehead. No one here knew, none of her classmates or peers could tell that she was a child who had additional needs or who lived with autism. So, for Mia, that was a huge plus. She felt a part of everyday classrooms, she felt a part of the school. She's not pulled out of class and she's not segregated in any way and made to feel like she's different and has to be taken out of classroom for specialised learning. It's all done within the classroom, which makes Mia feel included, which her not feel different to her peers.

We have great meetings with her teacher, with Raeleen, with anybody who needs to be involved in Mia's learning. NAPLAN coming up, school camp coming up, things that Mia wouldn't probably, normally do, if she was not here at Farnborough. I would have probably kept her back and not included her. But because of the support I've got, she's going to continue on, she's going to do the NAPLAN testing and she's going to go to school camp. Mia has never participated in school sporting events. She's participated in everything since she's been at Farnborough. She's just come in leaps and bounds. People don't recognise her as the same student that she was at her previous school. I think the environment plays a huge factor and the environment here at Farnborough has been amazing for Mia. She's a completely different kid, completely different and for so many positive reasons. I think, regardless of the school and a SEP unit, it makes no difference. A school with 1500 students or a school with 300 students. A SEP unit or no SEP unit, as long as the environment's amazing, then a student can thrive.

- My name is Ebony, my son is Eli. He's in Grade Two at Farnborough State School. He has severe speech and language difficulties. So he has trouble understanding what is being told to him, what is being said to him and he has trouble expressing himself. He was severely deaf until he was just over four and that was nine months before he started school here. So he's got a lot of difficulties in that area, the speech and language. He also has Perthes disease, which is a disease that affects his hipbone. So he cannot participate in any high-risk activities at school. He loves Farnborough School because of what they offer him. He loves his friends, he loves the programs they offer him. He just loves coming to school.

He's one of those happy-go-lucky kids that just wants to be a part of whatever's going on with his friends. It's really good, they offer a lot of things for Eli. They do a maths group, a reading group, a spelling group. He does some speech through the school now, which is really great. He also spends time through the week with Raeleen, the Special Needs Teacher. They do social skills and work on things for Eli, where he's struggling. They've implemented a really good Risk Management Plan for his Perthes disease as well so he can still participate in stuff at school without actually doing any of the high-impact activities. They offer a lot to him so that he feels included. What they do is they set a curriculum to his level so in class he actually feels like he's able to participate and to complete tasks. And he actually feels like he's winning. He comes home now and he actually feels like he's achieving.

So that's really big for me, as a mum to see your kid not struggling every day, not worried about going to school, but going to school and coming home really happy because he's not missing out and he's feeling like he's achieving. The support has been there from day one. They've done everything they could to help me establish what the problem was firstly and then find a way to help them deal with it through their schooling. So, I feel really well-supported. I feel like it's a big family and if I have any questions or if I have any concerns, the doors are always open to me. I can talk to anyone about my issues. We're always looking at Risk Management Plans, at plans to help them through each term of schooling. So I know what's coming up, I know what we're working on, I know what my son's working on and I feel that the support is always there.

I feel very lucky. He's in class with his mates and that's so important to Eli because he just loves his friends and he just wants to be like one of the other boys. With what they've offered him as far as the little groups, the extra support, the communication between myself with the teachers and Raeleen, the Special Needs Teacher, he just feels supported and he feels included. And that just makes a happy little boy.

- There's real benefit of having all students with diverse needs in mainstream classrooms, makes a massive difference from not just here in their primary years, but beyond. Those students have increased ownership of their peers and what it means to be a student at Farnborough. The relationships that they build here will last with them forever.