**The ABLES Program**

**Voiceover (VO)** - The Abilities Based Learning and Education Support Program is the development of a new teaching, learning and support model for students with disabilities.

 **Professor Patrick Griffin – (PG)** The idea that we can shift the whole paradigm from disability to ability is a fundamental shift and it really is exciting that we can scale this up to system level.

**VO -** There are five key points to the ABLES program. Firstly, it is a new model to assess a student’s abilities. Teachers and schools will be able to use a student’s assessment to develop individual learning plans.

It will include professional learning, curriculum materials and guidance for teachers.

The new program will identify the resources that are required to support students on their identified individual pathway.

The ABLES program will enable teachers, schools and parents to identify and set learning goals for students with disabilities and additional learning needs.

**Teacher with students –** Now into this box we want our heading…

**PG –** Students are funded on the nature of their disability. This shifts to the idea where we fund schools to promote growth and cognitive development amongst their students and it absolutely demands the understanding and the attitude that every student can learn. No matter how difficult it is they can all learn and they can all develop.

**Kevin Pope (KP), Principal – Meadow Heights Primary School –** All children can learn and they have a right to learn. If the planning is skilful and the goal setting specific, you can achieve the needs of progress and progression but at the same time make the children feel like they’re included in the group and that their learning is challenging even though it may not be exactly the same as the next group.

**VO –** The ABLES program underpins the Victorian Government’s aim of improving learning outcomes and providing better opportunities for all students.

**PG –** There is no doubt that the whole emphasis of education of students with additional needs will changes as a result of this. At the moment we are looking at students in schools on the basis of the disability that they have and the severity of that disability. We are trying to change the thinking of that to not their disability but their ability, their ability to learn, the progress that they make in learning and we are trying to shift the ways in which teachers interact with these students.

There won’t be feedback about the problems that students have but more about the progress that they are making. So the parents will get a benefit, the teachers will be supported through curriculum documents and resource strategies and resources and schools will be supported to fund this kind of education in a different way to what they are receiving funds now.

**KP –** It is about individual learning and it is about success. So It’s not about what’s Grade 6, or what is Grade 6 and you get it off the shelf. It’s about where the child’s at now. It’s about giving the child success. So it’s moving the child forward.

It’s about engagement. It’s about learning. It’s about the children achieving at whatever level they are at to that next space. And I think that’s the success or failure of any additional support program is the difference it makes to children’s lives and the success it delivers for them. And see the difference good teaching makes.