Grattan Institute report shows urgent need for targeted funding for disadvantaed schools



New data about NAPLAN and children's learning progress at school further confirms the urgent need for targeted, needs-based Gonski funding, the Australian Education Union said today.

The Grattan Institute's latest report *"Widening gaps: what NAPLAN tells us about student progress"* presents evidence of widening gaps in achievements between the poorest and richest students and that unless resources are targeted, children from disadvantaged backgrounds start to fall steadily behind between Years 3 and 9.

The gap between children of parents with low and high education grows from 10 months in Year 3 to more than two years by Year 9. Even if children are level with other peers in Year 3, disadvantaged students make one to two years less progress by Year 9. Furthermore, by Year 9, the top 10% of students are 8 years ahead of the bottom 10% of students. Children with higher NAPLAN results in disadvantaged schools show the biggest losses.

Correna Haythorpe, AEU President said,

"The findings in this report should be ringing loud alarm bells for Malcolm Turnbull and Education Minister Simon Birmingham. They need to do the right thing by Australian school children and back full Gonski funding in schools.

'We are within months of a federal election and they have no plans to address any of the problems highlighted in this important report. The researchers have shown that disadvantaged schools must have the resources to target children that are most in need – whether they are bright children in poorer schools or struggling children in other schools. The chance to get a great education should not depend on your family circumstances or your postcode.

The Grattan Institute report uses Naplan figures to track the changes in achievement as children move through each year, not just a single point in time.

It recommends:

- giving schools better support to target teaching at each child's needs;

- working harder to improve the progress of disadvantaged students so that every child in every Australian school can

achieve their potential.

“This report provides further empirical evidence that full Gonski funding is needed to tackle chronic levels of disadvantage.

We know that Gonski funding is lifting results and helping kids. Schools which are receiving Gonski funding are getting the resources for more one-on-one support, smaller classes and targeted literacy and numeracy programs – just that things that close the gap between struggling students and their peers.

“All these things are making a difference to student results. Investing in schools is an investment in Australia’s future.

“More than half the extra funding in the Gonski agreements is due to be delivered in the last two years. That’s why it is crucial Malcolm Turnbull doesn’t abandon disadvantaged students by stopping Gonski after 2017,” said Ms Haythorpe.

Grattan Institute report: https://grattan.edu.au/report/widening-gaps/

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