Federal Government needs to deliver Gonski, not more tests



The Turnbull Government needs to give schools the Gonski resources they need for their students, not more tests, the AEU said today.

AEU Federal President, Correna Haythorpe said Education Minister Simon Birmingham needed to listen to the experts who have today raised questions about the value of his proposed literacy test for Year 1 students.

“Students who are struggling with literacy need support and extra help at school and that takes resources. What is the point of a test if it is not followed up with support for students who need it?” Ms Haythorpe said.

“It is good to see the Queensland Education Minister pushing back against more testing and calling for increased resources for schools.

“Schools already have their own procedures in place to determine which students need literacy support. The missing link is giving them the resources to deliver targeted programs to students who need them.

“The AEU’s State of our Schools survey in April found that 40% of principals reported using Gonski funding for specialist literacy or numeracy programs.

“Our schools and students need the Federal Government to deliver the full six years of needs-based Gonski funding, which will ensure students have the chance to access support programs they need.

“The Federal Government’s plan to scrap Gonski funding after 2017 will see $3.8 billion dollars less go to schools, with disadvantaged schools being the hardest hit.

“The 2015/16 Budget Papers also show they will actually cut funding to public schools in the Northern Territory (by $28.9 million) and Tasmania (by $1.8 million) after 2017 – despite these schools having the highest needs of any part of Australia.

“We know that one-in-five students arrives at school not ready to learn, and that the rate is higher among disadvantaged students. These students need support at school to lift their skills and help them catch up.

“Schools are already using Gonski funding to provide extra literacy and numeracy programs, so why does the Federal Government want to stop this funding going to students who can benefit from it?”

“The Gonski Review was the most thorough examination of schools funding in a generation, yet the Coalition wants to replace it with a funding model that is not based on need, and where key details are unknown.

“Education Minister Simon Birmingham has already admitted in Senate Estimates he does not know where the $1.2 billion to fund the Coalition’s plan is to come from.

“He has also admitted he does not know what would happen if States and Territories do not agree to the conditions he wants to impose on funding.

“State Governments and the Senate need to stand up to any attempt by the Coalition to end Gonski and ensure that schools funding remains based on need.”

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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