New funding model a smoke screen to disguise federal government Gonski failure



The State School Teachers' Union has accused the federal government of pursuing a new funding model for schools in an attempt to disguise the fact that it's refusing to honour the full six years of Gonski funding.

The Federal Education Minister Simon Birmingham will meet with state and territory education ministers in Canberra tomorrow (Friday), where he's expected to start talks on a new schools funding deal to take effect from 2018.

The minister has reportedly labelled the previous deals reached with the Labor Government a "corruption" of the Gonski funding reforms, which aimed to provide federal funding to schools across the country on a needs basis.

SSTUWA President Pat Byrne said the minister's calls to shift funding between states as part of its proposed new schools funding system were just an attempted distraction.

"The federal minister is being mischievous about needs based funding and pitting one state against another will do nothing to lift results overall," she said.

"The reality is that the WA state government refused to sign up to the original Gonski arrangements, and the federal coalition has cut the fifth and sixth year of Gonski funding, which would have increased funding to WA schools.

"Calling the current agreements a "corruption" of Gonski is ridiculous. They are a way for all schools to eventually reach the minimum resources standard that the Gonski Review recognised our students need.

"What is a corruption of Gonski, is trying to return to a system where the biggest increases in federal funding are given to schools which do not need them, and where needs-based funding is abandoned."

Ms Byrne said it was imperative that as part of any new funding arrangements, states and territories must be forced to maintain their own spending on schools in order to receive federal funding.

"Under the current funding arrangements, there is no accountability, and no onus on the states to maintain funding levels," she said.

“There is nothing to stop state governments cutting their own funding to schools and using federal money instead, which is exactly what’s happened in WA, with the government cutting over $200 million from school budgets since 2013.”

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