# More than half of Australian students in under-resourced schools



More than half of Australian students are in schools where maths and science teaching are affected by resource shortages, the latest international data shows.

The PISA and TIMSS data released today also confirm that resourcing makes a difference, with Year 8 maths and science students in adequately-resourced schools performing significantly better than those in under-resourced schools.

The data also showed that staff shortages are six times more likely to impact students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and these students are three times more likely to be at a school where poor infrastructure impacts on learning.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said that the findings were more evidence for Gonski needs-based funding to ensure all schools had the resources they needed.

“Australian schools are significantly under-resourced and that is affecting student performance. Malcolm Turnbull’s plan to scrap Gonski needs-based funding after 2017 means that many schools will never reach the resource standard they need for their students,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“We need to know which students Malcolm Turnbull wants to miss out on the support and extra programs Gonski funding is already providing.

“The data confirms that the gap in results between students from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds in Australia is the equivalent of around three years of schooling.

“But it also shows the dramatic gaps in resources that are contributing to this. How can these students be expected to achieve when they are in schools that don’t have the basic resources for their education?”

The new analysis of PISA and TIMSS data, released today by the Australian Council for Educational Research, shows that:

- Principals reported 55 per cent of students attended schools where maths teaching was affected by a lack of resourcing, and 69 per cent where science teaching was affected.
- Student performance is heavily influenced by the level of school resourcing, with Year 8 students at schools where science and maths instruction were not affected by resource shortages achieving an average science score significantly higher than at schools that were affected by shortages.
- Australian students in the lowest SES-quartile are six times more likely to be at a school where the principal reports staff shortages as students in the highest-SES quartile (36% versus 6%)
- Principals reported that 34 per cent of low-SES students were at schools where inadequate infrastructure hindered their capacity to provide instruction, compared with 12 per cent of high-SES students.

“This is a stunning demonstration of how under-resourced our schools are and how these shortages add to the barriers facing disadvantaged students,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“Gonski funding is making a difference in thousands of schools, but two-thirds of the extra funding in the Gonski agreements is due to be delivered in 2018 and 2019.

“Malcolm Turnbull needs to abandon his plan to scrap Gonski after 2017 and give schools the full investment of six years of targeted funding, so that all schools can reach the minimum Schooling Resource Standard which the Gonski Review recommended.

“We know from past PISA reports that school systems with more equitable funding distributions perform better.

“We need Gonski funding to address past distortions in funding which saw the biggest increases in resources go to the schools which needed them the least.

“Between 2009 and 2014 total recurrent government funding per student to public schools rose by 14.6%, while funding to private schools rose by 30%.”



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