Education ministers urged to reject Gonski review panel timelines at meeting this week

The Australian Education Union has called on State and Territory Education Ministers to reject a four-week timeline for submissions to the Gonski 2.0 review panel just announced by Education Minister, Simon Birmingham. The ministers are gathering for the Australian Education Council meeting in Adelaide this Friday.

‘This review will shape funding negotiations with States and Territories that will directly impact thousands of children in our public schools.

‘In the face of deep concerns over school funding, the latest consultation is being drastically limited to avoid further scrutiny and limit the participation of teachers, many of whom are in the middle of school holidays,’ said Australian Education Union Federal President, Correna Haythorpe today.

The original review spanned many months and attracted immense public interest. More than 7000 written submissions were provided, and the panel met with hundreds of professionals and stakeholders in the school education community.

‘However, the Gonski 2.0 review timeline is farcical. Consultation is now being severely curtailed as funding pressure mounts, and just as serious problems with the Federal Government’s rebranding of Gonski are becoming much clearer. We need a consultation period that is inclusive and long enough to formally capture the sheer scale of concern,’ Haythorpe said.

She called on the Ministers at Friday’s Australian Education Council meeting to reject the timeline and call on Simon Birmingham to put forward a new timeline developed in consultation with the education profession to allow their full participation.

‘It is unacceptable that a Federal Government reducing its funding commitment to public schools is also seeking to silence teachers on the consequences that this will have for the thousands of children in public schools across Australia.

‘Their plan involves tearing up earlier agreements with five state and territory governments and cutting $3 billion in funding due to be delivered in the next two years. The least the government can do is consult properly on the plans proposed to replace agreements that were already in place.

‘If that doesn’t happen, parents, teachers and the broader community will have to ask whether Simon Birmingham is truly

open to scrutiny of his plans for education.

‘We urge every minister to demand an extended consultation process that allows a genuine dialogue with the education profession,’ Haythorpe concluded.

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