New data shows students at under-resourced schools missing out

The Australian Education Union says international data just released proves all Australian schools must be resourced properly, based on student need. The latest Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) shows students from well-resourced schools are achieving stronger outcomes than their counterparts at under-resourced schools.

“These results show the clear link between resourcing our schools properly and boosting overall literacy achievement,” said Correna Haythorpe Federal President of the Australian Education Union.

“The numbers speak for themselves. The correlation between funding schools adequately and student results is obvious. Average reading scores in under-resourced Australian schools are 22 points lower.

“The thirty-five percent of Australian students at schools affected by resource shortages score significantly lower than those at affluent schools.

“Australia’s stronger performance correlates with the rollout of needs-based funding from 2014-2016. The first three years of Gonski needs-based funding was starting to close gaps in student achievement.

“In the first three years that education funding was allocated based on student need, between 2014 and 2016, we can track improvements. Needs-based funding addresses educational inequality.

“It is clear that when funding is directed at disadvantaged schools we lift our national education results. Yet the Turnbull Government has cut $17 billion from schools.

“Malcolm Turnbull has turned his back on public schools.

“Public schools educate the vast majority of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. We educate 82 percent of students from low-SES families. Under Malcolm Turnbull’s education plan students in under-resourced schools will be denied the support they need to reach their potential.

“Indigenous student results are 26 points lower than average. It is a national disgrace that Indigenous students will continue to miss out under Turnbull’s funding plan.

“Our national results are set to stagnate under Malcolm Turnbull’s education funding scheme because it favours advantaged schools.

“When education funding is directed to address student need, we see results. All Australian students deserve a high quality education, and all Australian schools must be resourced to deliver that,” said Ms Haythorpe.

PIRLS data (2016) assesses 580,000 Year 4 students from 50 countries. Key results:

- The average Australian students score was 544 points, a statistically significant 17 points higher than in PIRLS 2011.
- Australian students performed significantly higher, on average, than students in 24 countries, including three other countries that tested in English – New Zealand, Trinidad and Tobago, and Malta.
- Fifty-seven per cent of Australian Indigenous students reached the Intermediate international benchmark, compared to 83 per cent of non-Indigenous students
- Sixty-four per cent of Australian students attended schools not affected by resource shortages. These students' average reading scores were significantly higher (22 points) than scores of students whose schools were affected by resources shortages.
- Fifty-seven per cent of Australian Indigenous students reached the Intermediate international benchmark, compared to 83 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

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