Pyne’s teacher training review ignores own research for teaching courses

Pyne’s Teacher Training Review ignores own research on importance of ATAR scores for teaching courses.

The value of the Federal Government’s Teacher Training Review has been called into question after media reports it has ignored its own research into the importance of high entry standards for teaching courses in compiling its final report.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said research by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) – commissioned as part of the Review – clearly showed high-achieving school systems focused on minimum entry standards to teaching courses.

“The research found the best-performing education nations in the world all recruit teachers from top graduates,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“It stated that: “*Australia’s teacher education policies are currently falling well short of high-achieving countries in terms of ensuring that future teachers are recruited from the top 30% of the age cohort*”.

“The research found that the most reliable way to select future teachers is based on their capacity to meet the intellectual demands of tertiary training and teaching.

“Less than 50% of Australian Year 12 students receiving offers for places in undergraduate teacher education courses had ATAR scores above 70, and the number with ATARs below 50 has doubled in the past three years.

“It is extraordinary that the final report of the Teacher Training Review and the Federal Government’s response have completely ignored this evidence in favour of minimum entry standards for teaching courses.

“Academic ability is an important factor in being a good teacher, and the recent drop in academic entry standards for teaching courses is an issue we need to address immediately.

“If we want the best teachers in the classroom, we need to get the best people and give them the best training possible to ensure they are properly equipped for the job.

“The ACER research also found that: *“Australia is unlikely to match the quality of teacher education graduates in high-achieving countries unless concerted policies are in place to enable teaching to compete with other professions in salary and career development terms.*

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“This crucial factor was also ignored in Minister Pyne’s response.”

“We believe that Review chair Professor Greg Craven’s position as the vice-chancellor of the Australian Catholic University, which recruits students with low ATARs for its teaching courses, has compromised the Review’s ability to tackle this issue.

“Minister Pyne’s comment last week that teachers could be great “regardless of ATAR scores” also shows a complete denial of this issue.

“The research also found that the use of interviews and psychometric tests as alternatives to ATAR scores was not backed by evidence and that interviews were “notoriously unreliable”.

“This report and the Government’s response has been a missed opportunity to address these issues. It is extremely disturbing to now find that valuable research has been ignored.

“The research also found that no high-achieving education system was deregulating teacher training providers.

“Yet in Australia we have no workforce planning and a system which is producing an oversupply of graduates, but which is unable to fill shortages of teachers in key subjects like maths, science and languages.”

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