No certainty for schools on Public Education Day

SSTUWA
State School Teachers' Union of WA



Public Education Day sees no certainty for schools on Gonski or disability funding.

Tomorrow's Education Ministers meeting in Brisbane must be used by the States and Territories to put pressure on the Abbott Government to commit to delivering the full six years of Gonski funding and to properly supporting disability in schools from 2016, the AEU said today.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said that today (May 28) was Public Education Day, a chance to recognise the huge contribution educators in public schools and TAFEs made to Australia, and to recognise the importance of needs-based funding for improving public schools.

"Education Minister Christopher Pyne is meeting State and Territory education ministers in Brisbane tomorrow," Ms Haythorpe said.

"States and Territories need to use this meeting to address the damage that the Abbott Government's decision to abandon the last two years of needs-based Gonski agreements will do to schools.

"Gonski is a needs-based funding system that recognises extra funding is required for students from low-income families, students with disability, students from regional Australia, Indigenous students and those with English as a second language.

"It also recognises that the majority of these students attend public schools, and that these schools must be properly resourced if they are to offer disadvantaged students the education they deserve.

"In particular it must discuss the crucial issue of funding for students with disability, which is currently at a level far below the actual level of need in our schools.

"The Gonski Review recommended a lift to the funding for schools which educate students with disability, because it recognises the chronic underfunding of this area.

"There are at least 100,000 students with disability – one-third of the total - not receiving any support funding at schools and who may be missing out on the benefits of education.

"The National Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) is to be completed this year, and it must be used to deliver a much-needed increase in funding for students with disability from 2016.

“Anything else will let students with disability down for yet another year.

Ms Haythorpe said educators deserved to be praised for their work in Australia’s public schools.

“Today is a day to celebrate the educators who provide quality education for millions of Australians. They deliver opportunities to students every day and their passion and professionalism is the glue that holds our systems together,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“They need to be supported by proper resourcing to ensure that all Australian children can receive a quality education that lets them reach their potential.

“We need the full six years of the needs-based Gonski reforms to ensure that all schools reach minimum resourcing standards.

“Minister Pyne has no agenda to improve Australian schools, and no plan beyond cutting funding from 2017.

“He is talking about making science and maths compulsory for students in Years 11 and 12, but he is not talking about who will be teaching them. We already have huge shortages of maths and science teachers and no plan from the Abbott Government to introduce the workforce planning we need to fix this.

“This is just another distraction from the key issues of funding and workforce planning which the Abbott Government has failed to tackle.”

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