Pyne Needs To Increase Funding For Students With Disability



Students with disability must receive extra funding support from next year, not just a standardisation of the current inadequate funding system, the AEU said today.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said the AEU welcomed Minister Pyne's confirmation yesterday that the long-awaited National Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) would be completed this year and used to inform funding for students with disability from 2016.

"We know that there is an urgent crisis in disability funding, with at least 100,000 students missing out on funded support in schools. The NCCD should be used to fix this problem and give these children the education they deserve," Ms Haythorpe said.

"It would be a huge missed opportunity if the NCCD was used solely to standardise funding between States, rather than to develop a system that gives all students with disability the support they need to achieve at school.

"We are letting down thousands of students with disability through a lack of resources and we need more than bureaucratic tinkering to fix this. It will require extra funding, but we need to understand that giving students with disability an education which allows them to reach their potential is an investment in their future.

"We need Minister Pyne, and the States and Territories to commit to properly fund students with disability from 2016. Instituting a disability loading which covered all students with disability was a key recommendation of the Gonski review and a bi-partisan election commitment from Labor and the Coalition.

"Preliminary data from the NCCD in 2011 estimated that there were 290,000 students with disability in Australian schools, this is far in excess of the 190,000 who are currently receiving funding support, according to figures released by the Productivity Commission in February.

"Minister Pyne said through a spokesman on April 4th this year that: more targeted funding would flow as a result of the first nationally consistent data collection for students with a disability, expected to be finalised at the end of the year.

"Minister Pyne boasts of the record amount of funding going to students with disability in 2015/16. This misleading statement ignores the fact that this is a continuation of existing inadequate arrangements with an increase for indexation and rising student numbers, not a genuine boost to support.

"He needs to take the lead on this issue and ensure that funding is raised to meet the urgent need in our school system."

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