AEU sets the standard for school funding arrangements



The Australian Education Union is calling for all public schools to be fully funded by 2028 to lift the one-on-one support children receive in the classroom and give teachers the time and resources to meet the needs of every child.

“Ensuring every child has the opportunity to reach their potential can only be realised through a fully funded public school system,” said AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe.

“But right now, 98 per cent of public schools are funded below the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), which is the minimum amount governments have agreed is required to meet the needs of all students.

“During the 2022 federal election, the Labor Party promised to deliver a ‘pathway’ to full funding for public schools. Today, we are making clear where that pathway needs to end.

“The Albanese Government must negotiate funding agreements with the states and territories that deliver 100 per cent of the SRS for every public school by 2028.

“The Commonwealth must lift their contribution to public schools to a minimum of 25 per cent of the SRS, with this contribution guaranteed through legislation. Under the Morrison Government, public school funding was capped at 20 per cent of the SRS except in the NT which is transitioning down to 20 per cent.

“State and territory governments also need to step up their share of funding and ensure every single cent is used for the purposes of schooling, not for depreciation, transport or the costs of regulatory agencies, as is currently the case (outside of the ACT). These accounting tricks are costing public schools $2 billion a year.

“Finally, the Albanese Government must re-establish a permanent Commonwealth fund for public school capital works, ensuring public school students are learning in 21st century, fit-for-purpose facilities. The current one year investment is a start, but it is not enough.

“Right now, the underfunding of public schools means one in every 10 public school students is effectively not funded. In the Northern Territory, it’s one in every five.

“This funding will change lives. It will enable schools to provide more one-on-one support for students, provide small group tutoring to those at risk of falling behind, give teachers more support in the classroom and more time to prepare high quality lessons. Unsustainable workloads are leading to a growing exodus of teachers from schools and making it harder for teachers to meet the growing and diverse needs of their students.

“Student wellbeing will also be improved with more counsellors and allied health professionals.

“All governments, particularly the Albanese Government, must make the investments required to give public school principals, teachers and education support staff the time and resources they need to educate their students.

“Funding for public education is an investment in our national prosperity.

“When we get it right, we can make our education system more equitable and break the unacceptable link between disadvantage and poor outcomes in education.

“We need excellence and equity in our education system and that can only be achieved when all public schools are resourced to the Schooling Resource Standard.”

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