Push for full funding of public schools



Pictured: Staff from Alkimos College celebrating Book Week 2023 while supporting the *For Every Child* campaign.

A new national campaign to secure full funding for public schools has been launched in WA as new evidence shows the importance of the additional investment.

The *For Every Child* campaign aims to secure full funding by 2028 to allow public schools to cut class sizes, increase the one-on-one support for students with additional needs and provide more time and classroom assistance for teachers.

The WA launch of the campaign was held recently at Carine Senior High School, with AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe joining SSTUWA President Matt Jarman, staff and members.

Ms Haythorpe said WA public schools are funded below the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), which is the minimum level that governments have agreed is necessary to meet the needs of all students.

“Funding public school systems at 100 per cent of the SRS across Australia is the only way to ensure every child gets every opportunity to succeed and we have the teachers we need for the future,” she said.

“The needs of our children are growing but the funding from governments hasn’t kept up. Principals and teachers are delivering a great education for students in WA public schools, but they are being asked to do too much with too little.”

An AEU survey of 752 WA teachers and principals reveals:

- Teacher workloads are at unsustainable levels with 73 per cent of teachers reporting the hours they worked increased in the last year.
- Over 40 per cent of principals report an increase in the number of teachers leaving before retirement in the last year and 86 per cent said they had experienced teacher shortages in the last year.
- There are growing wellbeing issues in WA schools with 73 per cent of teachers reporting a decline in student wellbeing in the last year and 90 per cent of teachers reporting a decline in teacher wellbeing.
- Over 95 per cent of teachers believe there are four key investments that would help them improve student outcomes:

additional support for students with a disability or behavioural issues, more time for lesson planning, more classroom assistance and smaller class sizes.

Ms Haythorpe said WA public schools are currently resourced at 95 per cent of the SRS, but four per cent of the state's 75 per cent SRS share was taken up by non-school spending, making the actual proportion 91 per cent.

She said the WA government needed to fund a full 75 per cent of the SRS, with the Albanese Government lifting its contribution from 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the SRS by 2028.

"The Albanese Government must take the lead in negotiations with the states and territories in the next 12 months and ensure all public schools are fully funded by 2028," Ms Haythorpe said.

"By increasing its share from 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the SRS by 2028 the Albanese Government would be providing an additional $1 billion that could be spent cutting class sizes and improving the one-on-one support for students in WA."

Mr Jarman said WA teachers and students were giving 100 per cent and it was time for the politicians to do the same.

"We have fantastic principals and teachers in WA public schools and full funding will allow them to increase the individual attention and support each child receives," he said.

"Smaller class sizes will make a huge difference to children across WA. Full funding also means we can give teachers more time for lesson planning and collaboration and make their workloads more sustainable. That will help lift results and ensure we can attract and retain the teachers we need for the future."

Ms Haythorpe said the *For Every Child* campaign includes targeted advertising, events and activities in WA school communities.

To read the *For Every Child* comprehensive plan visit our funding hub.

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