Close resource gap to close achievement gap

The release of the 2023 NAPLAN results, showing significant numbers of students across Australia require additional support in literacy and numeracy, reinforces the need for full funding of public schools.

“NAPLAN is just one measure of student achievement, and its importance should not be overrated, but the overall pattern of these results add to the evidence about the unacceptable achievement gaps between students from different backgrounds and locations,” said Australian Education Union Federal President Correna Haythorpe.

“While nationally one in 10 students are identified as needing additional support in literacy and numeracy, that proportion rises to as high as nine out of 10 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in very remote parts of the NT.

“What we need is real action from the politicians to ensure public schools are funded to deliver the additional support to the children who need it.

“We can’t close the achievement gaps without closing the resources gaps.

“Public schools educate most of the students with higher needs and yet only 1.3 per cent are funded to the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), which is the minimum level governments agree they need.

“In the NT where student needs are highest, the public schools are the most underfunded in the nation, receiving only 80 per cent of the SRS. That effectively means there is no funding for one in five students, which is scandalous.

“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. This has to happen by 2028.

“The needs of our children are growing but the funding from governments hasn’t kept up. Government funding for private schools has been increasing at twice the rate of public school funding and 98 per cent of private schools are resourced at or above the SRS.

“As part of the *For Every Child* campaign we have released a national plan setting out the top priorities for additional investment, which include smaller class sizes, a permanent small group or individual tutoring program in every public school and additional support for students with a disability or behavioural issues.”

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