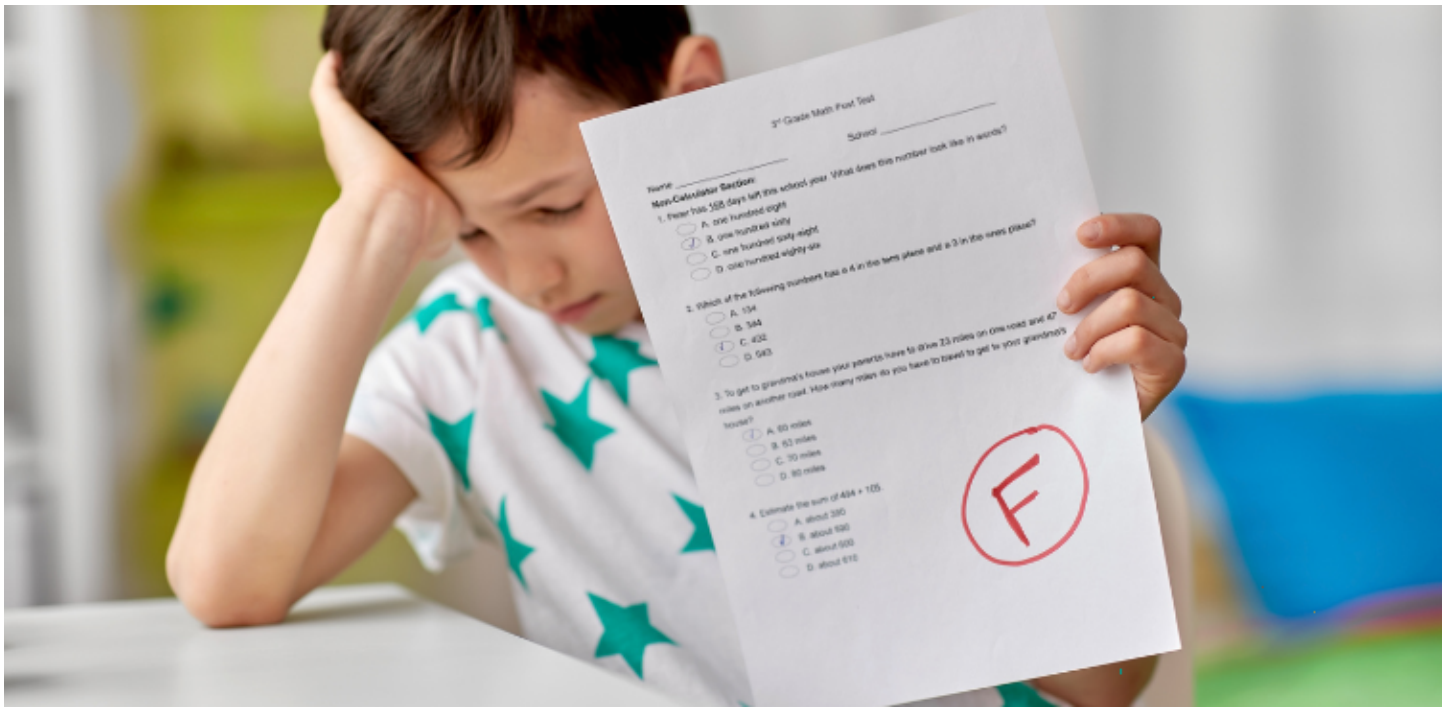
F for fail on disruptive classrooms report



The Australian Education Union says the interim report of the Senate Inquiry into increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms has failed to capture and address the complex issues that impact on teaching and learning in schools.

Federal president Correna Haythorpe said the report ignores the impact that the deeply entrenched and significant underfunding of billions of dollars every year has on public schools.

“The report frames behaviour as a problem for teachers in a simplistic manner by focussing on student discipline and narrow one size fits all approaches. It fails to address the fundamental issues that can lead to disruption such as the lack of individual support for students, lack of specialist support staff or learning programs and increasingly large class sizes in our schools.

“The report acknowledges that the causes of classroom disruption are complex and multifaceted but ignores the ongoing $6.5 billion shortfall that stops schools from hiring the additional teachers, providing mentors and specialist support required to help teachers address the increasing complexity of student needs.

“Further, the AEU rejects the one-size-fits-all approaches such as explicit instruction methods and changing class-room setups. This will not fix the huge funding hole that public schools have been dealing with for over a decade, nor should politicians be telling teachers how to teach.

“Highly effective teachers use a range of teaching strategies to engage and challenge students, meet their learning needs and assess and monitor their progress. The priority should be delivering the resources, time and support that teachers need to meet the individual needs of each student rather than retrograde changes that de-skill teachers and attempt to standardise teaching and learning. That is a recipe for worsening behaviour not improving it.

“The report cites figures that show public schools do not have the funds to support all students with disabilities but fails to propose an increase in funds that might help address this.

“The teaching profession has identified what is needed - more teachers with more time to support students, more specialist support staff to help students with complex needs and smaller class sizes, that is what will positively impact classroom

behaviour and improve learning.

“Public schools cater for the vast majority of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and yet public schools are denied the minimum level of funding needed to address this disadvantage.

“Only 1.3% of public schools are funded at the Schooling Resource Standard – the minimum amount governments agreed a decade ago was necessary to meet the needs of all students.

“Principals, teachers and education support personnel are delivering a great education for students in Australia’s public schools, but they are being asked to do too much with too little. Governments must provide the teaching profession with the essential resources and optimal learning environments required to deliver a high-quality education for all.”

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