Education Ministers must push for equality in public school funding



The State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia said the education of students at WA public schools would be affected unless the Federal Government agreed to lift its funding at a meeting of education ministers in Sydney today.

It's been reported the Federal Government is poised to offer to lift its share of funding for public schools from 20 to 22.5%, but this falls short of the 25% being sought by State Governments as the minimum students need.

SSTUWA President Matt Jarman said currently only 1.3% of public schools in Australia were funded to the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), which is the minimum level governments agreed a decade ago was required to meet the needs of students.

"A fair education system where every child can get the individual attention and support they need to succeed will not be achievable without equal funding," Mr Jarman said.

"The achievement gaps are being driven by the inequities of the expiring funding agreements. State and Federal governments have a generational opportunity to fund every child to the same minimum level.

"In WA we have a worsening teacher and school leader shortage. By not funding schools to 100% of the SRS the message to existing and potential teachers will be that things are not going to be any better in 2024 and beyond.

"In WA we now have two independently commissioned reviews highlighting many problems across the public school system. Fairer funding will help address some of the concerns raised in these reports.

"The Commonwealth has underfunded public schools for decades while overfunding private schools. In WA, this overfunding is approximately $223 million for 2023 alone.

"The reported offer from the Albanese Government of $2.3 billion for public schools is less than the $3.2 billion it will spend funding private schools, including some of the richest in the nation.

“Federal and State governments routinely remind the community of the power of education. Now, they both have an opportunity to equally fund every Australian child enrolled in a school.

“Funding public schools at 100% of the minimum standard is the only way to ensure every child gets every opportunity to succeed and we have the teachers we need for the future.”

The funding arrangements are being negotiated at a meeting of state education ministers with the Federal Education Minister Jason Clare in Sydney today.

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