



15 March 2008

CHANGE SCHOOL FUNDING SYSTEM NOW

Funding public schools based on a socio-economic index would deliver significant and urgently needed funding increases to public education, said the Australian Education Union.

Reports today indicate Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard will present a proposal to fund public schools based on their socio-economic status (SES) to COAG.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said the Federal Government needed to immediately change the way schools were funded.

"Over a decade of neglect by the previous Government has left a public education funding shortfall of at least \$2.9 billion per year," said Mr. Gavrielatos.

"The application of an SES funding index for public schools would deliver, without any doubt, additional funding for public school.

"An SES funding index that took into account all income sources for schools, including public and private income sources, would ensure schools that needed the most assistance would get the most funding.

"But the Rudd Government must act immediately to fulfil its stated responsibility to properly fund the public school system.

"They must also rectify problems with the current system that result in 60% of private schools receiving more than they are entitled to at a cost of \$2.7 billion to taxpayers over the next four years.

"Meanwhile the current funding arrangements see the public system under-funded by nearly \$3 billion annually.

"If the Commonwealth gave public schools the same level of funding as even the wealthiest private school currently receives, the public system would receive an immediate increase of \$750 million.

"The current minimum grant for the wealthiest private school is 13.7% of AGSRC compared to 8.9% for government primary schools and 10% for government high schools.

"A leaked government report commissioned by the Howard Government found that "the consistency and equity of the current SES funding arrangements is undermined by the fact that almost half the non-government school sector is funded outside the 'straight' SES model" as it currently exists," said Mr. Gavrielatos.

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