



**Australian Education Union
Presentation to Expert Review Panel
Review of Funding for Schooling
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**Australian Education Union
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AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION UNION

PRINCIPLES OF SCHOOLS FUNDING

- True equity can only exist when government schools set the standard for high quality education.
- The primary obligation of governments is to properly and adequately fund public schools.
- Every family has a right to a well resourced, high quality public school in their community.

This guarantee ensures that every child has a right to:

- a high quality public school where all children can learn together and learn to live together.
- qualified teachers and staff to meet their needs and aspirations.
- a curriculum of the highest quality which ensures the development of the whole child.
- a safe, modern 21st century learning environment.
- achieve his/her personal best.

The achievement of high quality education outcomes for every student requires recognition of the additional costs involved in educating children from a diverse range of backgrounds and circumstances. Factors such as family income, Indigeneity, language background, geographic location, disabilities and special needs, and other socio-economic and cultural factors have an impact on the educational needs and outcomes of students, and thus of schools and sectors.

A fair and equitable funding model must provide appropriate weightings which acknowledge the factors which increase the costs of providing high quality for all students, including:

- Low SES background;
- Indigeneity;
- Rural/remote location;
- Language Background Other than English;
- Disabilities and Special Needs.

It must also take into account the total operating resources from all sources available to a school, including private income.

School funding arrangements which contain a mechanism such as the AGSRC which transfers the higher average costs of educating a child in public schools to private schools which educate fewer children with complex needs are indefensible and unsustainable.



AEU Principles of Schools Funding Background Research Paper

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The Melbourne Declaration on the national goals of Australian schooling set two fundamental educational goals:

1. The promotion of equity and excellence in education.
2. That all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.

The purpose of the new funding system must be the attainment of these important educational goals.

Australia's new funding system should be underpinned by an unqualified commitment to ensuring that every child has an equal opportunity to achieve his / her full potential at school. This can only be attained by lifting overall student performance whilst simultaneously addressing underachievement.

Our funding system must be reformed to give real meaning to the notion that 'Demography is not Destiny'.

This requires universal provision of high quality public schools which all students can access. After all, the only guarantee every child has to an education is enrolment at their local public school. Simply put, public schools have a legal and moral responsibility to be open to all students; private schools don't and aren't. It is from this simple premise that the primary obligation of governments to properly and adequately fund public schools logically follows.

The provision of high quality public schools which are accessible to all and resourced to enable them to ensure that all students are given the opportunity to fulfill their full potential and achieve equality in their learning outcomes requires funding measures which satisfactorily address educational disadvantage.

This is central to the fundamental national goal of equity and excellence in education for all.

It is from these understandings that the AEU has adopted its Principles of School Funding, central to which is a belief that true equity in Australian education can only exist when government schools set the standard for high quality education and the right of every Australian family to a well resourced, high quality public school in their community is guaranteed.

This guarantee ensures that every child has a right to:

- a high quality public school where all children can learn together and learn to live together.
- qualified teachers and staff to meet their needs and aspirations.
- a curriculum of the highest quality which ensures the development of the whole child.
- a safe, modern 21st century learning environment.
- achieve his/her personal best.

The achievement of high quality education outcomes for every student requires recognition of the additional costs involved in educating children from a diverse range of backgrounds and circumstances.

Factors such as family income, Indigeneity, language background, geographic location, disabilities and special needs, and other socio-economic and cultural factors have an impact on the educational needs and outcomes of students, and thus of schools and sectors.

Australia's public schools educate the majority of students who are recognised to have particular educational needs, and there are large gaps in outcomes between many students in these groups. Students from high SES families, for example, have much higher education outcomes than students from low SES families, while non-Indigenous students achieve much higher education outcomes than Indigenous student.

Low SES Students

Independent researcher Barbara Preston's extensive analysis of the 2006 Census data shows that the public sector's declining share of the enrolments has been accompanied by an increasing concentration of low SES students and an increasing concentration of high SES students in the Catholic and Independent sectors. 46% of students from high income families attend public secondary schools, while three-quarters of low income families with secondary school children enrol them in public schools.

Preston's analysis of the income background of Indigenous students also shows that public schools educate 90% of low income Indigenous secondary students compared to 70% of high income Indigenous secondary students. Catholic schools educate just 10% of all Indigenous secondary students, but 20% of high income Indigenous secondary students attend Catholic schools. Only 6% of all Indigenous secondary students attend other private schools, although they enrol 10% of high income Indigenous secondary students. (The pattern is similar at the primary level.)

Indigenous students

ABS data shows that in 2009 85.7% of Indigenous students attended government schools.

Indigenous FTE Students 2009	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Sector share of Indigenous Students [%]									
Government Schools	87.2%	88.2%	85.4%	88.7%	84.3%	86.9%	81.0%	80.1%	85.7%
Catholic Total	9.8%	8.4%	8.3%	5.5%	9.8%	9.9%	10.2%	16.2%	9.1%
Independent Total	3.0%	3.4%	6.2%	5.9%	5.9%	3.2%	8.7%	3.7%	5.2%
Non-Government Schools	12.8%	11.8%	14.6%	11.3%	15.7%	13.1%	19.0%	19.9%	14.3%
Indigenous Students as a proportion of all full time students [%]									
Government Schools	5.5%	1.5%	8.1%	4.9%	8.2%	8.2%	43.3%	3.0%	5.9%
Non-Government Schools	1.6%	0.4%	2.9%	1.1%	2.9%	3.1%	29.0%	1.0%	1.9%

Enrolment Numbers ABS Schools Australia 2009 Released March 2010: Indigenous Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Students - by States and Territories and School Affiliation; All FTE Students

Students with Disabilities and Special Needs

Productivity Commission data shows that in 2008 79.5% of students with disabilities and special needs attended government schools.

Funded students with disabilities, 2008	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Sector Share Students with disabilities [%]									
Government schools	77%	78%	82%	78%	85%	87%	80%	93%	80%
Non-government schools	23%	22%	18%	22%	15%	13%	20%	7%	20%
Students with Disabilities as a proportion of all full time students [%]									
Government schools	5.9%	5.5%	4.4%	3.5%	9.2%	5.1%	5.1%	12.5%	5.5%
Non-government schools	3.5%	2.8%	2.0%	2.0%	3.1%	1.9%	1.7%	2.8%	2.8%

Productivity Commission *Report on Government Services 2010* [ABS 2009, Schools Australia 2008, Cat. no. 4221.0; DEEWR (unpublished)]

Students with Language Background Other than English [LBOTE]

Data from the 2006 ABS Census and the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services* shows that the majority of students with language backgrounds other than English are enrolled in public schools.

Number of LBOTE Students	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Government Schools	174,476	114,193	53,244	32,471	20,809	2,820	6,910	7,440	412,364
Non-Government Schools	103,130	84,003	30,104	24,155	15,752	2,088	4,550	2,259	266,041
Total LBOTE Students	277,606	198,196	83,348	56,626	36,561	4,908	11,460	9,699	678,404
Sector share of LBOTE Students [%]									
Government Schools	62.9%	57.6%	63.9%	57.3%	56.9%	57.5%	60.3%	76.7%	60.8%
Non-Government Schools	37.1%	42.4%	36.1%	42.7%	43.1%	42.5%	39.7%	23.3%	39.2%

English as a Second Language - New Arrivals Program - National Enrolments 2002-06

National 2002-06 enrolment data for the ESL New Arrivals Program provided by DEST in 2007 shows that the overwhelming majority of these students are enrolled in government schools.

Number of ESL NAP Students	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Government Schools	8,531	9,788	9,526	11,089	11,933
Non-Government Schools	847	1,024	1,162	1,118	1,168
Total (all sectors)	9,378	10,812	10,688	12,207	13,101
Sector Share ESL NAP Students [%]					
Government Schools	91.0%	90.5%	89.1%	90.8%	91.1%
Non-Government Schools	9.0%	9.5%	10.9%	9.2%	8.9%

A state/territory breakdown of the data for 2006 shows:

Number of ESL NAP Students 2006	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Government Schools	4,507	3,426	1,319	806	1,545	140	98	92	11,933
Non-Government Schools	416	383	151	123	51	42	0	2	1,168
Total ESL NAP Students	4,923	3,809	1,470	929	1,596	182	98	94	13,101
Sector Share ESL NAP Students [%]									
Government Schools	91.5%	89.9%	89.7%	86.8%	96.8%	76.9%	100.0%	97.9%	91.1%
Non-Government Schools	8.5%	10.1%	10.3%	13.2%	3.2%	23.1%	0.0%	2.1%	8.9%

Students in rural/remote locations

Enrolment data from 2008, reported in the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services 2010* showed that nationally, the proportion of students enrolled in schools in remote areas was 1.4% - more than twice as high in government schools (1.8%), compared with non-government schools (0.8%). Nationally, the proportion of students enrolled in schools in very remote areas was 0.9% and four times as high in government schools (1.2%), compared with non government schools (0.3%).

Australia has no accurate national data to assess the number of Indigenous school-aged children who have access or *no* access to a school within travelling distance. In 2006 the number of discrete Indigenous communities spread across Australia was 1,187. Of this number 767 Indigenous communities were in very remote locations most of which do not have schools, or if they do, the school is most likely to provide primary level education with a visiting teacher who attends for a number of days each fortnight. In the Northern Territory, approximately 2,000 Indigenous school-aged children (of a total Indigenous population of approximately 68,000) have no access to a school and it is believed that these young people are not attending school.

From Australian Human Rights Commission *Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples' Australian Mission 17-28 August 2009* (on AHRC website)

'Students at Risk'

Education economist and policy analyst Adam Rorris' analysis of 'Students at Risk' data from 2006 showed that almost 80% of students defined as being 'at risk' by the MCEETYA Schools Resourcing Taskforce are enrolled in public schools.

Enrolments 2006	Primary	Secondary	Total	Sector Share
Public sector enrolments	1,366,882	890,645	2,257,527	67%
Private sector enrolments	570,587	550,541	1,121,128	33%
Total enrolments	1,937,469	1,441,186	3,378,655	100%
Students 'at risk' – 2006	Primary	Secondary	Total	Sector Share
Public sector	164,026	130,034	294,060	78%
Private sector	57,059	25,325	82,384	22%
Total	221,085	155,359	376,444	100%

The skewed nature of educational disadvantage correlates with the higher proportion of students from low SES backgrounds in public schools. The fact that nearly 80% of the students 'at risk' can be found in public schools provides a clear signal to governments as to where the real high priority funding needs can be found.

A fair and equitable funding model must provide appropriate weightings which acknowledge the role of public schools in educating a disproportionate share of students with particular needs and the factors which increase the costs of providing high quality for all students.

It must also take into account the total operating resources from all sources available to a school, including private income.

School funding arrangements which contain a mechanism such as the AGSRC which transfers the higher average costs of educating a child in public schools to private schools which educate fewer children with complex needs are indefensible and unsustainable.