



Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham

LIBERAL SENATOR FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA | MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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SUNDAY, 01 MAY 2016

The quality reforms needed to get all Australian students ahead

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The Turnbull Government has committed to the most significant package of education quality reforms in a generation to drive excellence in Australia's school students as part of a \$73.6 billion student achievement plan.

An additional \$1.2 billion from 2018 to 2020 will be tied to a needs-based distribution of funding and reforms in our schools to help every parent have confidence that their child is receiving the teaching they require.

The Turnbull Government is focused on achieving quality outcomes from our record levels of funding.

School funding will grow every year from current record levels of investment, but at an affordable rate of growth based on recent changes in the cost of delivering education. Most importantly, it will be tied to evidence-based initiatives that will lift student performance and results.

While student enrolments have increased by only 18 per cent between 1987-88 and 2011-12 Australia's education funding, adjusted for inflation, has grown by 100 per cent – yet our international rankings for reading, literacy, mathematics and science have fallen between eight and ten places.

Analysis shows Korea and Poland spend less per student on school education than Australia yet perform better than us in international assessments, while countries like Norway, the United States and Sweden spend more per student and perform worse.

It is clear that while a strong level of funding matters, what you do with that funding matters more.

That's why today, the Turnbull Government is saying to every mum and dad that for your child to get ahead we must focus on what matters most. We must focus on the evidence, we must concentrate on those things that we know make a difference to student achievement and we must not accept the status quo.

Our quality-focused and evidence-based priority reforms will ensure funding distribution is needs-based and drives reform in core, robust and proven ways of improving outcomes in education.

The Turnbull Government student achievement plan will improve outcomes in literacy, numeracy, STEM subjects, teacher quality and engagement with our region. Amongst other measures our plan will require reforms to:

- Have minimum proportions of trainee teachers specialise in literacy and numeracy.
- Use explicit literacy and numeracy instruction in all schools.
- Undertake a standardised Year 1 school assessment of students' reading, phonics and numeracy skills to ensure the earliest possible interventions occur for students who need additional help.
- Provide annual reports to parents that identify literacy and numeracy attainment against national standards that will help monitor progress and identify problems.
- Set a minimum standard of literacy and numeracy skills for Year 12 school leavers.
- Ensure that, within a decade, students complete an English or humanities subject and a maths or science subject prior to attaining an ATAR.
- Set recruitment targets for teachers qualified in science, technology, engineering or mathematics subjects.
- Ensure all principals are certified before their appointment.
- Link teacher salary progression to demonstrated competency and achievement against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, rather than just length of service.
- Require graduate teachers to achieve registration at the Proficient Level of the Professional Standards within three years.
- Incentivise high-performing teachers to work in disadvantaged schools.
- Expand the Early Learning Languages Australia programme into the early years of schooling.
- Pursue school access and immigration reforms to fast track availability of teachers in key foreign languages.
- Improve career advice by working with industry and schools to develop a new National Career Education Strategy.

A key priority for the Turnbull Government is to provide parents and families with greater transparency of where the additional funding is flowing and how the strategies and interventions it supports impact on student outcomes.

Clearer transparency for mum and dad will allow them to see the educational benefits that are flowing to their child, as well as the amount of funding. This will hold States and Territories to account for distributing funding according to need and demonstrating how they are applying it to best practice.

While Bill Shorten has promised more money for schools, Labor is ignoring the decades of significant funding growth yet declining performance. For all Labor knows, their extra funding will be used to build a second or third sports shed or pretty up a school gate rather than addressing the generational deficiencies of our schooling system.

The Turnbull Government knows that every tax dollar paid by hardworking Australians needs to be used as effectively as possible and our school reforms will seek to ensure this occurs in our schools so that students receive the quality outcomes they need to secure jobs in our new economy.

Full reform priorities and further information is available at www.education.gov.au/schooling

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