

THE TURNBULL COALITION TEAM

CCHQ 2016

The Plan for a Strong New Economy



SENATOR THE HON SIMON BIRMINGHAM MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING SENATOR FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

12 May 2016

FOCUS ON WHAT WORKS, NOT JUST THE FUNDING IN SCHOOLS

Fresh analysis from a leading education research centre backs the evidence-based approach of the Coalition's once-in-a-generation plan to lift school student achievement.

"...increased expenditure has not produced significantly improved student outcomes (at least not in the areas for which we have good measures). In fact, as this paper has observed, performances often have declined despite increased funding." (p. 26)

-Five challenges in Australian school education-

Minister for Education and Training Simon Birmingham said the Australian Council for Educational Research's (ACER) report *Five challenges in Australian school education* supports the Coalition's evidence-focussed approach to reversing Australia's declining student results and outcomes.

Minister Birmingham said the report specifically highlighted that it's not just about how much money is spent, but how it is used to focus on evidence-based initiatives that improve the quality of education in schools.

"The Turnbull Government's back to basics Student Achievement Plan focuses on what ACER has called for, the better use of resources, to target evidence-based initiatives," Minister Birmingham said.

"Our once-in-a-generation plan to lift school student achievement provides more money than ever before for Australian schools but most importantly it focusses on measures that improve student results through clear and targeted action, unlike Labor.

"This research reinforces what teachers and families know – we need to focus on what actually makes a difference for our students because while spending on Australian schools has increased, the results of our students have gone backwards.

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“This report smacks down Labor’s cash splash approach to schools that has been shown time and time again to be an ineffective way of improving outcomes for students.

“The Coalition’s quality-focussed and evidence-based reforms will ensure funding distribution is needs-based and requires reform in robust and proven ways to help every parent have confidence that their child is receiving the teaching they need.

“Our student achievement plan details initiatives that will improve outcomes in literacy, numeracy, STEM subjects, languages, teaching quality and prepare students for the jobs of the future.

“The lack of detail in Labor’s approach to schools about how money will be used is exactly what ACER warns against – 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 Coalition is the only party with a fully funded and affordable plan that ensures money is used as effectively as possible on proven ways to deliver better outcomes for students.

Key quotes from ACER’s report:

- “Overall levels of national expenditure on schools are generally not correlated with measures of student performance or equity. However, there is international evidence that *how* resources are used does make a difference.” (p. 13)
- “When national resources are used to minimise student residualisation, to ensure that every school has access to high-quality teaching and school leadership, and to promote the use of effective, evidence-based practices in every school, it is more likely that every student will receive a high-quality education regardless of the school they attend.” (p.13)
- “Progress in addressing these challenges [of underachievement] almost certainly requires a different set of strategies.” (p.15)
- “...increased expenditure has not produced significantly improved student outcomes (at least not in the areas for which we have good measures). In fact, as this paper has observed, performances often have declined despite increased funding.” (p. 26)
- “Our national challenge is to maximise the impact of government expenditure by targeting it on evidence-based strategies to improve performances in Australian schools.” (p. 26)

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Turnbull Government's Student Achievement 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.

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