

Federal Budget Submission 2014-15

School Funding

Need to Succeed Alliance

Key Recommendation

The NTS Alliance recommends the Australian Government set aside the necessary funding to transition to a school funding model **centered on the SRS**. The Alliance supports the transparency of school funding arrangements and seeks inclusion in Government consultation surrounding school funding and the adoption of a fairer funding model for the benefit of all Australians.

Introduction

In this submission, the Need to Succeed (NTS) Alliance outlines three principles necessary for the implementation of a fair, sector-neutral and transparent school funding arrangement in the 2014-15 Federal Budget. Though the government is faced with a formidable task in addressing Australia's present fiscal situation, the parallel challenge of fostering **equality of opportunity** in our schooling system cannot be ignored.

The NTS Alliance commends the Australian Government's commitment to additional school funding and we look forward to the 2014-15 budget delivering on this commitment. We also welcome the pledge to implement a funding model that is national, fair and needs based (Pyne, 2013).

For this promise to be realised we believe every jurisdiction needs to implement a needs based funding model with loadings for disadvantage. We urge the Australian Government to negotiate with each jurisdiction and deliver a national solution.

We also believe for the solution to be fair and truly sector neutral that a funding commitment for the full six years is necessary.

The NTS Alliance acknowledges the complexity of introducing a school funding model that matches this ambition, and we welcome any opportunity to support the Australian Government to overcome challenges in its adoption.

Recommendations

The NTS Alliance supports the adoption and implementation of a school funding model where:

1. All Australian students should be given what they need to succeed via an education funding model that is fair and transparent

The Review of Funding for Schooling 2011 found that the prior funding model lacked a "logical, consistent and publically transparent approach to funding schooling."

Developing a new funding model presents an opportunity to create a **simpler, fairer and more transparent** framework for school funding. For all students to be given what they need every school system and jurisdiction needs to 'opt-in' to a needs based funding system.

2. School funding should address real need. The Student Resource Standard (SRS) is the best and fairest way to do this.

The SRS identified in the 2011 funding review set out a fairer model for school funding. It is calculated as a per-student amount that recognises the approximate recurrent expenditure required for a student with minimal levels of disadvantage to be educated to an agreed national standard.

It also incorporated funding loadings for specific student and school based sources of disadvantage in a sector-neutral manner. This would cover geographically remote, indigenous, low-SES students and other demographic indicators that indicate a higher standard of resourcing is necessary to achieve equitable schooling outcomes.

A **SRS-based** funding model would **complement** the Australian Government's **Student First** strategy to confront the problem of educational inequity in Australia. The NTS Alliance supports the adoption of the full SRS model and welcomes inclusion in any government consultation surrounding the SRS.

3. School funding should be sector-neutral, so funding addresses student need regardless of what school they attend.

While the majority of students in the lowest SES quartile are educated in the government system, the most effective way to **promote equality of opportunity** for all Australians is to adopt a **sector-neutral** approach to school funding (Gonski et al, 2011). The NTS Alliance fully supports the further development of school funding formulas required to achieve this aim.

Context

The results of Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012 show once again the urgent need for education reform in Australia, demonstrating statistically significant achievement gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous students, remote and urban students and the highest and lowest socioeconomic quartiles of students. NTS Alliance support OECD advice that breaking the link between SES and educational outcomes will require a school funding model that acknowledges the challenges faced in educating those young people experiencing disadvantage.

The Need to Succeed Alliance

The 'Need to Succeed' Alliance was launched to support the implementation of the 'Gonski' school funding reforms.

The Need to Succeed Alliance brings together a broad range of NGO leaders, members of the Gonski review panel, school associations, principals, teachers, parents and community members who are calling on all Australian governments to implement sector neutral needs based school funding. We believe a sector-neutral, needs-based funding model is the best way to ensure all students the get the education they need to succeed.

Supported by the undersigned

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