

Issue No. 9

03/12/13

SCHOOL FUNDING GUARANTEED

Few would disagree that the announcements on School Funding leading into the election in the past week have been bewildering to say the least! APFACTS was closely following the events as they unfurled and we were vocal in our support for stability and certainty for schools and parents.

APFACTS and ACT Education Minister, Joy Burch were united in their call for certainty in school funding to ensure that schools were able to operate effectively beyond 2014. It was frustrating to see that the future of our children's education was being used as a political football.

APFACTS press release 28th November 2013: [Why should parents bear the financial brunt of a political mess?](#) called for:

- The quantum of funding promised at the election to be guaranteed and delivered
- The review to be conducted quickly and with consultation
- A funding model that is needs based, coherent, transparent and equitable across the country to be known by mid-2014 and ready to be implemented by 2015.
- A definition of disability to be a priority, so funding can properly serve students with disability regardless of sector which has remained unsolved 30 years!

To listen to an interview following this release, [click here](#).

The Federal Minister for Education, Christopher Pyne confirmed on 2nd December additional funding enabling all States and Territories to be funded.

APFACTS President, Charuni Weerasooriya said *"Now that we have a funding model for all States and Territories guaranteed for four years, it is time for complete transparency on what this looks like in classrooms around the nation. We call on the ACT Education Minister, Joy Burch to clarify the ACT's needs based funding model (cross sectoral) so everyone knows what funding and resources are available to schools."*

In recent days, more ACT non-government schools have released their fee schedules for 2014 which confirm that school fee increases range from 3%-17% across the ACT non-government sector. We need stability and transparency in funding arrangements so variances like this are not seen again.

"The evidence is now overwhelming that parent engagement in schooling is one of the biggest contributing factors in student attainment. We need the right stable funding and school climate for parents and schools in partnership to bring out the best in our young people" said Charuni Weerasooriya.

WHY DID SO MANY 'GIVE A GONSKI'

The changes to the funding model, as recommended by the Gonski panel were meant to:

- establish a formula for determining need which, if correctly applied, would restore equity,
- remove the potential for ideological battles through its 'sector blind' approach,
- establish full portability for loadings, achieving t
- the end to sector discrimination for students with disabilities,
- genuinely benefitted low and middle income independent schools serving disadvantaged students and communities,
- vastly improve local autonomy, providing schools with real decision making power over the use of loadings in a way that could respond to individual student need,

- remove distortions due to side deals and bilateral arrangements,
- provide a means of targeting, and measuring against, educational outcomes.

The uneven implementation of Gonski has created enormous difficulty, uncertainty and complete opacity. It is no longer the fair and transparent implementation we were promised. The lack of transparency around these arrangements is completely unacceptable. Schools still do not know exactly what their funding will be for 2014 and have had to prepare their budgets regardless. Add to the mix the confusion over whether or not the funding deals would be honoured by the current government and parents are completely in the dark about what school fees are likely to be into the future.

AITSL LEARNING FRONTIERS

AITSL's student engagement in learning initiative is an exciting project that will bring focus towards students driving their learning. The case for change is interesting reading. (insert flyer). This new Learning Frontier will define and lead development of professional practice to support the successful delivery of the Australian Curriculum in an increasingly digital and globalised environment, paying particular attention to 21st century skills.

Learning Frontiers intends to bring together clusters of schools, supported by systems and sectors and other interested parties, to examine teaching and learning. The design principles being utilised of personal, integrated, connected, co-created will look to create a holistic and student centric learning environment and enable some schools around the country to lead the way in re-framing this engagement with students in their learning.

"The connection of home and school in partnership enables relational learning to take place for our students. The importance of creating a learning environment that is encouraged and supported by all the individuals in a student's life can only lead to our students becoming lifelong learners." said Charuni Weerasooriya.

Representatives from APFACTS recently attended the Learning Frontiers Design Principles Workshop at Daramalan College.

NAPLAN

ACARA clarifies NAPLAN standards and achievement scale - The minimum standards currently used for NAPLAN were set in 2007 and ACARA has commenced work to review these with the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, the move to online assessment and in the light of international reports. Read the entire article

ACARA has published its Annual Report 2012-13. This report highlights ACARA's achievements in curriculum, assessment and reporting and lists the advisors who have contributed to our work. Read the entire article.