



Association of Parents and Friends of A.C.T Schools Inc

The Association of P&F's of ACT Schools Representing the Interests of ACT
Non-Government School Parents

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2.08 October 2008

APFACTS meets on the 4th Thursday of each month during school terms. Meetings are held at the APFACTS Office, Minns Place, WESTON. All welcome.

Have you seen the new APFACTS website? Take a look!
www.apfacts.org.au

APFACTS Executive:

President:

Tony Maple

Vice President:

Ross Norgate

Treasurer:

Paul Sykes

Secretary:

Kirsten Wilkinson

Executive Officer:

Kate Lyttle

"Parents have the right to choose the kind of education that should be given to their children." UN Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26.3)"

All electoral matter in this newsletter is authorised by Tony Maple, President, APFACTS, Minns Place, Weston ACT.

2008 ACT Election Edition

The facts

41% of school aged children in the ACT attend non-government schools.

Parents of the ACT's 25,000 non-government students contribute an estimated \$260 million per year in savings to the Territory Government by choosing to send their children to non-government schools.

Funding to schools, both government and non-government, does not keep pace with the rising education costs.

The parents of children attending non-government schools pay taxes that contribute to meeting the education costs of *all* ACT children.

In addition, they choose to pay school fees to provide the most appropriate education they can for their children.

The things that matter to ACT parents are that:

1. they are able to choose the type of education they believe to be best suited to their child
2. all students have access to, and receive, a quality education that enables them reach their full potential
3. it is recognised that effective partnerships with parents, school communities and school authorities are central to the success of student outcomes

To achieve this, APFACTS calls on ACT candidates to commit to policies which:

- continue to assist the non-government sector to access facilities and resources with priority going to those students with the greatest need
- fund non-government school students at a rate matching the national average of the funds provided by other state and territory governments
- acknowledge, support and enhance effective partnerships with and between parents, school communities and school authorities.

APFACTS supports increased funding to improve educational outcomes in ALL schools - government and non-government.

The following are summaries of the published policies of the major parties running candidates at the 18 October election, as at 13 October 2008. Full transcripts can be found at the web sites indicated:

(NB: in alphabetical order)

Australian Labor Party

www.actlabor.com.au

A Labor Government is committed to \$51.4 million in new educational funding over the next four years. The funding will be devoted to:

- More teachers and smaller class sizes – across all years of schooling
- Ensuring the best teachers
- Renewing public schools
- Ensuring the ACT continues to lead the nation in education ICT
- Getting back to basics – reading, writing and maths
- Supporting gifted and talented students
- Supporting languages education
- Supporting innovation in secondary schools
- Increasing support for school-based apprentices
- Ensuring the best education in the early years
- Increasing administrative support in schools
- Strengthening parent involvement in schools
- Increasing support for students in non-government schools
- Providing \$4.1 million over 4 years to help address need in non-government schools. This initiative is aimed at promoting equity within the non-government school system
- Investing \$2.1 million to provide each parents group or association in every ACT school, government and non-government, with a one-off \$15,000 grant to be spent on a project or projects to improve the school. This investment also includes \$1,500 for each preschool parent association.
- investing \$7.5 million over the next 3 years for ICT grants to public and non-government primary schools for investments in ICT infrastructure including smartboards and new PCs. \$2.5 million will be made available to non-government schools and \$5 million to public schools.

Canberra Liberals

www.actliberals.com.au

Announcement of Extra Funding For Catholic and Independent Schools

A Liberal Government is committed to:

- providing a one-off injection of \$2 million in 2008-09 to non-government schools. The funds are to be untied and may be used for either capital or recurrent purposes
- increasing the indexation of recurrent funding for all ACT non-government schools to 5.5% per annum, over the next four years at a cost of \$8.4m
- an audit to be conducted of the needs of students with disabilities across the non-government sector in 2009 and a one-off \$250,000 'top up' to support students with disabilities in non-government schools
- restoring the Interest Subsidy Scheme where the interest component of loans for capital upgrades is reimbursed. Higher needs schools (as measured on the Education Resource Index) will be able to apply for a subsidy on a sliding scale up to an interest rate of 8%, while the subsidy for the lowest needs schools will scale incrementally down to 2%. The initiative will cost \$2.16M over 4 years
- extending the maximum of 21 students per class through all years of primary schools, extending the support given from K-3 right up to year 6 students
- delivering training programs to assist teachers in working effectively with smaller classes. These programs will include methods for assisting children with particular needs in the class, including those with poor educational outcomes and gifted students. The programs will also assist teachers to improve their practices for managing difficult student behaviour
- restoring the 35 high school teaching positions cut in early 2007. It will create pathways into teaching for mature age professionals who bring valuable skills from outside teaching. It will also provide incentives for high quality graduates to join the ACT government schools system
- broadening the sources for teacher recruitment to tackle the particular challenge of attracting sufficient teaching graduates in priority areas such as secondary science, mathematics and information technology (IT).

- offering 20 HECS forgiveness scholarships per year to teaching graduates with outstanding records of academic achievement who also have tertiary qualifications in the fields of science, mathematics or IT
- establishing an independent Education Complaints Commissioner from within Department of Education resourcing.
- The Commissioner will be responsible for impartial assessment of complaints.
- Complaints may be made confidentially or openly, and the Commissioner may work with relevant parties to find solutions and to conciliate between the parties.
- increasing funding for teacher development, by supplementing the Teachers Professional Learning Fund with a 50% increase in funding. In the 2009 school year, annual funding for teachers' professional development will stand at \$1.5 million.
- indexing future funding for professional development by 3 per cent per year in order to maintain its real value. And we will also index the Teachers' Scholarship Fund.
- commissioning a review of teacher professional development, to ensure that funding is being allocated in the most effective way.

The Canberra Party

www.richardmulcahy.com.au

The Canberra Party is committed to:

- supporting increased pay for teachers
- focusing on core skills in public education
- giving parents greater direct control over public education
- requiring public schools to get informed parental consent for activities or education involving sexual or political matters
- giving parents greater choice of public schools
- giving greater control to principals, not education bureaucrats
- allowing competition from non-government schools on an equal footing with public schools
- opposing preferential treatment to particular schools
- opposing the re-opening of recently closed public schools; and ensure that any future

public school closures undertaken by the Government allow parents and others the opportunity to buy out the school and continue to run it as a non-government school

- moving towards parity in funding for students on a 'per student basis' at non-government schools.

Community Alliance

www.cap.org.au

The Community Alliance Party is committed to:

- developing schools as true neighbourhood centres
- re-opening Flynn, Cook, Hall and Tharwa primary schools and will consider other schools on a needs and community desire basis
- reducing the gap between low and high achieving students in ACT schools
- providing assistance for children who have individual learning and developmental needs
- addressing behavioural management issues to make schools safer for students and teachers
- ensuring that teacher remuneration will be negotiated and finalised prior to the expiration of the current EBA, and will reflect comparative professional pay scales
- promoting teacher recognition and career pathways, along with increased recurrent funding and protection from privatisation

The Greens

www.act.greens.org.au

The ACT Greens are committed to:

- establishing a high-level taskforce to develop a needs-based approach to education funding, with a focus on improving equity of outcomes
- commissioning research into the drift away from the ACT public education system, and subsequently develop and implement a strategy to reverse this trend
- assessing the impact of the 'Toward 2020' program and set up ongoing consultation with communities affected by school closures to address negative impacts
- retaining public ownership of all ACT public education infrastructure

- requiring all ACT schools to comply with the Anti-Discrimination Act
- reviewing pay, conditions and career opportunities of ACT Education professionals to develop a comprehensive strategy addressing their recruitment and retention
- providing adequate resources and training to ensure the safety of all students and staff
- making a significant investment in high schools and colleges to improve school coordination and administration, innovative teaching and student–teacher relationships
- expanding and diversifying alternative settings and programs within schools for students with severe behavioural problems
- adequately funding comprehensive student support services, ranging from learning assistance to health and welfare
- providing effective early intervention and ongoing support for students and families in need
- implementing programs of social service delivery, community activities and community education in schools at appropriate hours
- funding programs to facilitate parent involvement in student learning and increase school resources to improve school/family communication
- increasing the availability and quality of publicly run Out of School Hours care programs for all children
- strengthening the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, environmental studies, languages and the arts, and implementing cross-curriculum approaches to sustainability education
- encouraging innovative teaching and curriculum development through engagement with the community sector
- providing additional teachers and resources for students with special needs, including those experiencing learning difficulty or disability and those with special skills or talents
- additional training and professional development for teaching staff to increase the support available to students with disabilities in mainstream classes
- developing and implementing culturally appropriate learning methods and resources, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- providing appropriate education for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, including ongoing access to tuition for those who wish to study English as a Second Language
- implementing education system planning, resourcing and decision-making that respects the views of school communities and other stakeholders
- partnership approaches between schools and families at early childhood and primary school levels
- providing access to free pre-school education for all three and four year olds
- establishing a rolling program of secondary school infrastructure upgrades
- comprehensively reviewing the ACT University Admission Index system, and implementing changes where necessary
- expanding the provision of tertiary, vocational and community education programs, including the ACT Adult and Community Education grant programs
- adequately resourcing the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system as the main provider of vocational education and training in the ACT, and extending funding for vocational education programs in schools
- ensuring adequate affordable accommodation options for higher education students.

The Liberal Democratic Party

www.ldp.org.au

The LDP is committed to:

- progressive withdrawal of governments from the provision of education
- regular accreditation of schools based on objective standards including facilities, accountability and performance
- introduction of an education voucher system, with vouchers transferable between any accredited public or private school
- freedom by parents to choose a school for their children
- reducing the role of government to setting and enforcing the rules by which schools are accredited and facilitating the operation of market forces among education providers
- allowing failing schools to close or be taken over by better performing schools
- removing barriers to opening new schools

- external literacy and numeracy testing of children, with publication of results for each student and school
- allowing schools to make their own decisions on staffing, curriculum design, teacher salaries, etc
- establishing incentives to upgrade the teaching profession through improved training, rewarding good teachers and sacking bad teachers

Pangallo Independents

www.pangallo.com.au

Pangallo Independents are committed to:

- priority be given to early childhood education and supporting teachers to improve teaching standards
- establishing a teacher registration board with representation from parents, teachers, unions, universities, business and the ACT government to advise on teaching standards and professional development of teachers
- investing in more technology for ACT primary and secondary schools