

Committee Secretary  
Senate Select Committee on School Funding  
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## Submission to the Senate Select Committee on School Funding

I retired as a School Principal, December 2012. I went to Boundary Bend State School (Vic), the Edwardstown Primary School and Urrbrae Agricultural High School. I trained at Roesworthy Ag. College then Adelaide Teachers College. I have worked for 37 years as a teacher, coordinator and Principal (20 years) at Meningie Area School, Cleve Area School, Mintabie Area School, Pt Augusta (inc. School of the Air and Carlton Aboriginal School) and Loxton Primary School. I concluded my career at Loxton Primary School (which included one year in head office, Flinders Street, as a project officer, and a term as Acting Assistant Regional Director). I feel my wide experiences allows me to make some valid points regarding this submission.

My education enabled me to be successful in the education sector even though I came from an income poor family. I am highly concerned that the gap between those well off and those not so well off is getting bigger. A fair go and access for all has been a part of Australia's success. I am also concerned about Australia's long term future.

On the broader scale years 5 and 6 funding means that Australia would be investing in its future and a world number one education will be the greatest asset for our children and their children. With manufacturing taking a dive and mining up and down and finite education that will promote new technology development, worlds best agriculture/ food production, robotics, cutting edge medical treatment etc will see Australia in good standing.

Gonskis key principle of equal funding no matter what school with a loading for

some disadvantaged groups is a sound platform for a good future for all. We cannot foster a country that has two classes.

Teachers are now time poor and expected to be social workers, counsellors, medical experts, teacher so road safety etc etc. Every week in the media someone is suggesting schools should do more (drugs, drink driving, weight, skin cancer, etc.) Compared to when I started there is so much more and less time. Of significance is there is less time for literacy and numeracy and when people do make time other areas such as PE and The Arts suffer. My Mum is 87, think about the literacy and Maths rich schooling she had with no outside demands. Even though she finished school at 14 she is highly literate.

So years 5 and 6 is simply a massive investment just like car subsidies (were) or research (albeit smaller).

For those who say class size does not matter, sorry take my school in Port Augusta . I defy the researchers to take 30 year 7 Indigenous students and get the outcomes expected (fortunately this was not the case). Clothing, health violence etc all play a part and need to be managed. Even in mainstream in this town my three eldest boys suffered with literacy issues because teachers were too busy with crowd control. I sometimes wish I never took them there as it is causing life long disadvantages for them. The 4th boy was educated in Loxton and is currently being successful studying mechanical engineering at Adelaide Uni.

With expectations and accountability and using the best models (eg Finland not USA) I think a big Gonski funding in years 5 and 6 is the only option for Australia success in the LONG TERM.

Monies could be spent on specialist maths, science, literacy teachers, nurses (eg Indigenous school) social workers, [leave the teacher to teach!] resources (eg latest science equipment). In particular a big science funding (including primary schools) would be a great investment in Australia's future. In primary schools the management, expectations and accountability have been ramped up but the basic personnel structure has not changed. An examination of a Principal's role will soon show they are taking short cuts and are not able to keep up with much of their time being stolen from the important area of curriculum leadership.

Thanks for reading this.

Paul

Submitted by Paul Rowe

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