

## NSW signs bilateral schools funding agreement

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NSW has signed a bilateral agreement with the Federal Government that will deliver an additional \$6.4 billion to public schools over the next ten years.

The agreement includes a \$712 million School Equity Fund which NSW Education Minister Rob Stokes committed to fund after the Morrison Government refused any additional funding for public schools.

NSW Teachers Federation president Maurie Mulheron said the additional investment was welcome news for public school principals, teachers, parents and students.

However, he strongly criticised the failure of the Morrison Government to move beyond its plan which will see the Commonwealth give public schools only 20% of the funding required to meet a national Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) compared to 80% for private schools.



“We have a Prime Minister who is privileging students in private schools over those in public schools and the effect of that will be to make it harder to ensure that every child receives a high quality education,” Mr Mulheron said.

“Not only will private schools get 80% of the SRS from the Morrison Government but they also will get an additional \$4.6 billion in extra funding announced in September.”

The funding and reform agreement between the Federal Government and NSW runs from 2019 to 2023.

It contains little new in the way of state education reforms but, importantly, does not include some proposals that the Federal Government had tried to include such as a Year 1 standardised phonics test.

Along with boosting the funding of public schools, the agreement includes a commitment by the NSW Government to reduce the share of funding it provides to private schools from over 25 per cent of the SRS now to 20 per cent by 2029.

Mr Mulheron said that was a welcome and overdue step with individual private schools in NSW receiving up to \$2.8 million more than their public funding entitlement every year.

“With private schools getting a minimum of 80% of the SRS by 2023 from the Federal Government, reducing their state share of funding should happen as fast as possible.

The Morrison Government’s failure to accept the NSW Government’s calls for additional funding for public schools contrasts with the position of the Federal ALP which has announced recently a \$14 billion investment in public schools and a commitment to work with state governments to bring all schools to 100% of the SRS if

it wins next year's federal election.

"Clearly, there is now a stark choice at the next federal election for supporters of public schools: the Morrison Government's continued underfunding of public schools or, alternatively, Federal Labor's commitment to fully fund public schools to the tune of an additional \$14 billion dollars to enable them to reach the SRS. This is the message we'll be taking to the community," Mr Mulheron said.