

## Incentives must not drain funding

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Scholarships and pay increases recommended by the Grattan Institute to attract high-achieving HSC students to the teaching profession were worthwhile but should not be allowed to skim money from already-scarce current funding for the public system, Federation has stated.

Among key points in a new Grattan Institute report is a proposal that highly accomplished teachers should be able to earn up to \$80,000 a year more than at present, while high-achieving school leavers should receive a \$10,000-a-year scholarship if they take up teaching.

Federation President Maurie Mulheron said the Grattan Institute's report demonstrated the fundamental importance of securing additional Commonwealth funding for the public school system.



He said that while any initiatives that help attract and retain academically successful students in teaching were worthy of consideration, the cost should be quarantined from recurrent funding.

"Australia must present teaching as an attractive profession to high achievers," Mr Mulheron said. "However, we do not support the position taken that if these initiatives were implemented they should be funded from current funding provisions. It must be made perfectly clear to education ministers at all levels of government that any new initiatives must, under all circumstances, be resourced via new sources of funding, not redirected from already-scarce existing recurrent funding for public schools."

The proposed package would carry an estimated \$1.6 billion annual price tag.

The Grattan Institute report, *Attracting High Achievers to Teaching*, is based on the premise that high achievers rarely see teaching as an attractive financial option, and it claims a desire to teach from this cohort has steadily declined over the past four decades.

"The Morrison Government has already prevented public schools from being fully funded to the schooling resource standard through to 2023," Mr Mulheron said.

"The public school sector simply does not have any spare funding available to invest in initiatives similar to that proposed by the Grattan Institute.

"The Morrison Government must not be allowed to use any potential response to this report as a smokescreen for its continued failure to fund public schools at the schooling resource standard."

Mr Mulheron said it was important that education departments and the teaching profession work together to make teaching a more attractive option for potential Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students.

"Numerous international studies have consistently shown that higher teacher salaries, relative to those of other comparable professions, increase the likelihood of highly performing secondary students becoming teachers," he said.

"To attract high-achieving students into teaching it is absolutely necessary to invest in appropriate salary and reward structures. However, what must be addressed is the behaviour of those universities that consistently defend low entry standards into initial teacher education courses as this is undermining the status of the profession."

— Scott Coomber