



20 February 2024

The Hon. Jason Clare
Minister for Education
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

We write in relation to the current funding negotiations between the Commonwealth Government and the State and Territory Governments regarding the funding gap for public schools.

As the peak social service bodies representing members nationally and across the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and Western Australia, we ask that you swiftly resolve this matter by working with state and territory governments to fully fund public schools with at least a 25% contribution from the federal government to achieve the School Resources Standard by 2028. Analysis by the Australian Education Union reveals that in 2024 public schools in the Northern Territory will receive 41 percent less funding than the School Resource Standard. Queensland and Victorian schools will receive 9.5 percent less funding in 2024 than they should under the Schooling Resource Standard. In NSW, the figure is 7.3 percent, and in Tasmania, it is 6 percent underfunding while in South Australia and Western Australia, the figure is 5 percent. If this matter is not resolved, we risk seeing more children fall through the cracks.

With 1 in 6 children in Australia currently living in poverty, this funding commitment couldn't be more urgent. Particularly given the concentration of disadvantage is in our public schools by a large margin.

Public schools are educating the vast majority of students with higher needs including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, rural and remote areas, students with a disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

A well-funded, high quality public education system is essential to ensuring education equity. Without adequate funding, disadvantaged children in the public system risk falling further behind their peers, further embedding inequality in Australia.

It is incumbent on the Albanese Government to ensure public schools are fully funded. This opportunity is too important to squander, and we encourage you to work collaboratively with the state and territory governments to reach an agreement that puts the wellbeing of our children first.

Yours sincerely,

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Dr Devin Bowles
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Cara Varian
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