

Media Statement

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PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN ROBBED... AGAIN

The Western Australian Primary Principals' Association claims preliminary assessment of the new student-centred funding model, will see programs axed and large numbers of school students worse off.

President of the WA Primary Principals' Association Stephen Breen described the new funding model as a slick public relations exercise that appeared to be a cover up for further funding cuts to education.

"The student-centred funding modelling appears at best to be creative mathematics, and at its worse big education cuts that will set back primary education in this state," he said.

Recently, the Minister for Education Peter Collier announced a funding overhaul that meant that school funding would be allocated on a child-by-child basis, based on individual needs rather than by school types or programs.

Under the new student-centred funding model, schools would receive a base amount for each student, with additional funding to help children with extra needs.

Mr Breen says that this is contrary to the results from the figure crunching that principals are currently undertaking to assess the impact on their primary school students.

"One school principal, in an economically disadvantaged area, has told me she will lose a number of staff and be forced to curtail speech and oral programs as well as their proactive three-year-old programs, he said.

"For a funding system that is supposed to support students with needs and be working towards early intervention, we are missing the boat".

While praising the efforts to remove inequalities in the WA education system, Mr Breen went on to say that he has been inundated with calls from principals who have said they will need to reduce staff and drop important programmes especially in the early years.

"A student centred funding model with a one line budget is sound in principle - provided that budget is adequate, he said.

"With the Government taking \$180 million from the recurrent education budget to fund other government expenses, this has obviously distorted any real benefits of the new funding model".

Mr Breen previously publicly commented that the new model was "a journey in progress".

"Leaders in our schools are frustrated by the confusion, the lack of transparency and the 'smoke and mirrors' being used to introduce education reform with an education budget that is constantly being cut", he said.

"The journey is fast becoming that of one on a dark road".

Mr Collier recently announced that 500 jobs will be cut from the education sector across the State. In 2014, the funding to every public school in WA was cut.

"The compounding effect of cutting expenditure in education will play itself out in WA schools, said Mr Breen.

"The most disappointing thing is that WA primary school children are not getting what they deserve."

-ENDS-

FACT FILE

- The Western Australian Primary Principals' Association (WAPPA) is a member based, not-for-profit Incorporated Association. Membership is open to WA primary school principals, deputy principals and aspirant leaders.
- WAPPA has a membership of over 1,000 leaders from WA primary schools.
- WAPPA's mission is *sustainable enhancement of the profession of primary school education in WA through member support, leadership development, and advocacy to influence educational outcomes.*

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