



Our ref: JMG:JD

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Committee Secretary  
Senate Education and Employment Committees  
Department of the Senate  
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### **Re Public School Funding Submission**

I am writing this submission to you on behalf of the 12,000 members of the Australian Education Union (SA Branch).

While we welcome the move from a ceiling to a floor in the Bill, we are concerned that this floor is at 20% and not at the full funding percentage of 25%. South Australian public schools will be underfunded by the Commonwealth Government \$190M per year with the new arrangement as the public schools are essentially in a holding pattern from the Coalition Government position. Public school students are missing out on over \$1,000 per student in funding in the Student Resource Standard and this Bill will make no difference to this funding as it stands.

It appears that this new legislation will keep the promise of public school students being the poor cousins to private schools and the continual emergence of a two tiered system. All children and young people, no matter their background or circumstances, are entitled to receive a high quality education. Public schools in South Australia educate proportionally twice the number of students from low socio-educational advantage backgrounds and 3.5 times the number of First Nations students. What are we to tell these students and families if the legislation is not changed to the full 25%?

There are many challenges being faced daily across the South Australian public school system. The funding gap is contributing to these challenges. Schools are experiencing a teacher shortage crisis with classes having to be merged on a daily basis, and student learning is compromised without fully qualified, subject-specific teachers in classrooms. Principals, teachers and support staff are doing the best they can with what they have. They are feeling disrespected and undervalued with many questioning staying in the profession.

Principals, teachers, support staff, students and families urge the Federal Government to finally end decades of neglect. We call on you to do the right thing and step up and fully fund public schools now. Our society's future depends on it.

Yours sincerely

JENNIE-MARIE GORMAN  
Branch President