



# The Coalition's Policy for Schools: Students First

August 2013

## Key Points

The Coalition will improve schools and education outcomes for students.

We will do so through policies proven to deliver better education outcomes: more say for parents and teachers, a sound national curriculum, improved quality teaching, and certainty over school funding.

Since 2007, education outcomes in Australian schools have gone backward.

Rather than develop comprehensive solutions to declining performance, the Rudd-Gillard Government has focussed debate on funding models and the amount of money available to schools. While these are important considerations, they are only one component in creating better schools.

More money is not necessarily the only solution for better education outcomes.

Instead of addressing falling standards, Labor's plan for schools is little more than a Commonwealth takeover of local schools. Labor's plan will impose a rigid and inflexible system that will stifle the autonomy and local level responsiveness needed to generate better education outcomes in the long-term.

The Coalition believes that schools are best run by those on the ground who can make decisions to deal with local issues. We will encourage school communities to make a greater contribution in deciding what suits their school because the last thing anyone wants is for Canberra to control what happens at the local school.

If elected, we will implement real change that gives all Australian schools and local communities the best chance to improve education outcomes.

**There will be no cut to school funding under a Coalition government.**

The Coalition's *Policy for Schools: Students First* builds on four key principles:

- a stable, simple and sustainable approach to funding that gives schools, teachers and parents certainty for the future;
- a renewed focus on what students learn through a robust national curriculum;
- improved quality of teaching and related support services; and
- a greater say for teachers, principals, parents and the community about how their school is run.

The Coalition is committed to improving teacher quality. Domestic and international studies have consistently shown that teacher quality has the greatest impact on student learning outcomes.



If elected, the Coalition will act to help new and existing teachers deliver improved quality teaching in the classroom.

We will ensure that the national curriculum is improved so that it teaches students the things they need, but remains flexible enough to cater for a diverse school community.

We will work to provide principals, teachers and parents with a greater say about what happens in their school. Many principals and school communities are still not trusted to manage their own school. Increasingly, parents feel like their voice and opinions are not taken seriously. This is despite a strong body of evidence suggesting that strong parental and community engagement is one of the most important factors in a student's educational success.

Our policy will encourage school communities to have greater say in how their schools are run. We will do so because the Coalition trusts teachers, principals and parents to do the right thing and to work toward improving education outcomes for students.

The Coalition's *Policy for Schools: Students First* will deliver better education outcomes by providing more say for parents and teachers, a sound national curriculum, improved quality teaching, and certainty over school funding.



# Introduction

Everyone agrees that Australia should have the best education system in the world.

Education is the base on which careers, skills, productivity and civil society are built. An effective education system allows individuals to broaden their opportunities, to enhance their self-worth and to realise greater positive outcomes for their families, the community and their own futures.

Australia must aim to keep up with our international competitors. But in recent times, our educational performance has gone backward. The countries that have overtaken us internationally have focused on extensive reforms to teacher quality, school autonomy and school leadership.

The question is not whether we need to deliver better education outcomes, but how we best go about it. Any approach must recognise that the Commonwealth is limited in its ability to implement change in schools.

Many issues that affect education outcomes and school performance - such as teacher pay and conditions and class sizes - are the responsibility of State and Territory governments. This is rightly the case because bureaucrats in Canberra can have either little practical understanding of the issues affecting individual schools or capacity to effectively monitor the implementation and outcomes of Commonwealth programmes at local schools.

If elected, a Coalition government will work cooperatively with State and Territory governments with the aim to improve education outcomes all around Australia. We will respect the traditional role of State and Territory governments. Our aim will be to work productively to achieve improvements at a national level without imposing our will on the States and Territories.

We believe that the best way to achieve better education outcomes is to provide policy certainty for schools and to allow them to focus on practices that allow better education outcomes to actually be realised, including: stable funding arrangements, quality teachers, a robust curriculum, and a greater say for school communities.

The Coalition understands that excellence in the classroom directly translates into national prosperity and productivity.

We are committed to building a world-class education system that will equip Australian children to succeed in an increasingly competitive world.



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# The Plan

## 1. Stable and Sustainable Funding

The Coalition's *Policy for Schools: Students First* will deliver a stable, simple and sustainable approach to funding that gives schools, teachers and parents certainty for the future.

Fundamentally, we will work cooperatively with the State and Territory governments to ensure school funding arrangements provide stability and certainty.

### *a. Stable school funding*

The Coalition will provide Australian schools, teachers, students and their parents with the funding certainty they deserve.

Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard made a mess of their attempts to deliver the 'Gonski' reforms. So far, they have agreed to five different funding models with five different jurisdictions.

Seven different deals have been entered into with the five governments of South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory and the two major non-government school bodies. No agreement has been reached with the governments of Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The Coalition will:

- ensure Commonwealth schools funding committed by Labor for school year 2014 will flow to all States and Territories irrespective of whether they have signed a deal with the Rudd-Gillard Government;
- amend the Australian Education Act to ensure the States, Territories and non-government sectors keep authority for their schools; and
- match the Commonwealth funding for schools committed by Labor over the forward estimates.

Our approach will provide schools and parents with the funding certainty they deserve. It means that the Coalition will match Labor dollar-for-dollar over the next four years.

There will be no cut to school funding under a Coalition government.

We will work cooperatively and constructively with all States and Territories to negotiate a fair and sustainable national funding model.



## *b. End the Control from Canberra*

The Coalition will stop the Canberra schools takeover and stop Kevin Rudd's blame game with the States and Territories about school funding.

We will dismantle all 'command and control' features imposed by Labor on the States, Territories and non-government schools and any new funding will not be conditional upon a deal which reduces their authority over schools or creates unnecessary red tape.

If elected, the *Australian Education Act* will be amended to remove any parts that allow the Federal Government to dictate what states and territories must do in their schools. This will ensure that the States and Territories remain responsible for schools and that non-government schools maintain their independence and autonomy.

There will be no extra red-tape or bureaucracy under the Coalition's fairer school funding plan and we will not establish a new national bureaucracy.

We will not allow federal school inspectors to enter public and non-government school classrooms to do head counts and impose new red tape. The last thing schools need are more bureaucrats in schools with clipboards monitoring standardised approaches to teaching and learning. The Coalition does not believe in a mandating a 'one size fits all' approach that would restrict diversity and innovation.

We recognise and respect the reality that there is not one school system in Australia but eight school systems run by the States and Territories.

Our plan to end the red tape and control means that every school will be able to spend the extra funding on teaching and learning, rather than on extra administration costs.

## *c. Better support for students with disabilities*

The Coalition will match the Commonwealth funding committed by Labor to extend support for students with disabilities for twelve months, while a new 'loading' formula is developed for these students.

We will continue the data collection process that has started with the States and Territories so that future funding for students with a disability can be based on each student's level of need.

Current funding arrangements for students with a disability and learning difficulty are unfair and inequitable. Students with disabilities deserve better support so they can access the schools and education programmes that best suit their needs.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will significantly boost support for all Australians with a disability. The NDIS is fully supported by the Coalition.



### *c. Safe and secure schools*

The Coalition will commit \$18 million to continue the Secure Schools Programme.

The Secure Schools Programme helps to protect schools that face a special risk of attack, harassment or violence stemming from racial or religious intolerance. Our ongoing commitment to this programme recognises the unique security circumstances that some schools face.

The Coalition will work with schools that face risks to improve their security arrangements and, above all, help families and students feel safer in their schools and communities.



## 2. A Greater Say for School Communities

The Coalition will ensure that school communities have greater say about what happens in their schools. There are countless studies that show improved education outcomes for students are linked to engaged school communities.

### *a. Independent public schools and greater community engagement*

The Coalition will work with the States and Territories to encourage 25 per cent of existing public schools to become Independent Public Schools by 2017.

To support those schools that elect to become an Independent Public School, the Coalition will establish a \$70 million 'Independent Public Schools Fund.' This Fund will provide grants directly to a school to assist them in becoming independent.

The Coalition is committed to improving the ability of schools to respond individually to local issues that are affecting learning outcomes of their students.

We believe that senior members of a school community are far better equipped to know what is best for their school than government bureaucrats.

Independent schools are accountable to the local community and provide the autonomy needed not only for principals to achieve better education outcomes, but for principals and teachers to be more accountable to students, parents and the community.

Independent public schools remain as state government schools, but the way in which the school runs more closely resembles that of a non-government independent school.

Independent public schools have been a clear success in Western Australia.

The Western Australian State government has successfully implemented an Independent Public Schools initiative that gives parents, principals and school communities greater power to determine how their local school operates.



## CASE STUDY: INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Western Australian Independent Public Schools can:

- set their strategic priorities with freedom from central policies and procedures in certain areas
- have control over day-to-day decision-making in areas of financial management, curriculum, student support, staff recruitment and selection, management of teachers and other staff, payroll and maintenance of buildings and facilities.
- give parents and community members an important and enhanced role through school boards; and
- ensure local decision-making processes can best meet the needs of students.

By the end of 2013, 255 of 829 Western Australian schools will be Independent Public Schools - nearly a third of all schools.

Western Australian Independent Public Schools cannot:

- be selective about enrolment.
- charge tuition fees like non-government schools.

This is important and one of many reasons why the Coalition supports the model.

### Results

Western Australian is the only jurisdiction in over 20 years that has recently seen enrolments in the Government sector growing faster than in the non-government sector. This means that parents value Independent Public School model.

A recent evaluation by the University of Melbourne found that the model has set the scene for improvement, has been embraced by school communities and is leading to a sense of rejuvenation in the government school system.

Under the Western Australian approach to independent public schools, schools can have freedom from central policies and procedures in the areas of: financial management, curriculum, student support, staff recruitment and selection, management of teachers and other staff, payroll, and maintenance of buildings and facilities.

By the end 2013, 255 of the 829 schools in Western Australian will be Independent Public Schools - nearly a third of all state government schools.



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Based on the progress in Western Australia, the Coalition will aim to encourage 1,500 (or 25 per cent) of all schools to adopt similar levels of autonomy over the first four years of a Coalition government.

A programme to implement Independent Public Schools will lead to higher productivity, better quality education outcomes for students.

The Coalition will also produce and publish a guide for parents that includes the latest information about the regulations in place in each State and territory detailing how schools board and councils can operate.

There are vast differences between the States and Territories on how government school boards operate and how much of a say parents really have in local decision-making. The Coalition will make it easier for parents to understand how they can become involved in school boards.

Our \$70 million 'Independent Public Schools Fund' will support those schools that elect to become an Independent Public School. A grant from the Independent Public Schools Fund could be used for training and professional development purposes to help prepare and plan for a successful transition in governance arrangements or to deliver a community based education programme relevant to their school community.

This will ensure that principals, staff, registrars/business managers and representatives of School Councils have access to and training and support to successfully become an Independent Public School.



### 3. A Robust National Curriculum

The Coalition will ensure that a greater emphasis is placed on the quality of school education. Australia is moving toward implementing one national curriculum, so it is important that we get its content right to ensure it equips our young people with the basics they need.

#### *a. Restoring the focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics*

The Coalition will restore the focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects in primary and secondary schools by:

- establishing a STEM Ministerial Advisory Board to ensure these subjects get more attention when teachers are being trained; and
- working with State governments to ensure more STEM subjects are given a greater focus with a view to increasing the extent to which they become compulsory in senior secondary years.
- maintaining funding for the 'Primary Connections: Linking Science with Literacy' science education programme and the 'Science by Doing' programme.

These three measures are important steps towards increasing the number of students studying science and mathematics subjects.

Primary Connections, in particular, has been a very effective programme for the promotion of science in primary schools since it commenced under the Howard Government in 2004. Fifty-five per cent of all Australian primary schools have adopted at least one of the Primary Connections teaching models into their teaching programmes.

Remarkably, Labor tried to cut this valuable programme. This caused outrage amongst schools and the science community, and prompted the Australian Academy of Science to say:

*"...at a time when Australian students' interest in science is declining and achievement standards are slipping, it makes no sense for the Government to cut funding for primary and high school science education programs that are proven to improve teacher quality and increase students' science knowledge and skills."*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.asianscientist.com/academia/australian-government-cuts-funding-science-edu/>



### *b. Flexible literacy learning for remote primary schools*

The Coalition will invest \$22 million to improve reading and writing learning outcomes for students in remote primary schools.

Literacy levels in remote primary schools are below those in other areas. Some schools have overcome this problem by adopting flexible teaching methods, such as the Direct Instruction method in Cape York.

Not every remote primary school is the same and they should be given the flexibility to adopt teaching methods that they believe will work, such as direct instruction or phonics. To encourage and support better learning outcomes in remote primary schools, the Coalition will provide a \$22 million pool of funding to which remote primary schools and education providers working with schools can apply to adopt flexible teaching methods.

School communities will apply for a grant to deliver a flexibly taught programme that will be conditional upon:

- having a rigorous school attendance strategy involving families and potentially the broader community, being in place;
- demonstrating a strong commitment by the principal to direct, explicit and systematic teaching of phonics; and
- providing evidence that there is strong community support and the active involvement of parents, teachers and community groups.

The Coalition will work with the State and Territory governments to ensure that truancy laws are enforced.

### *c. Improve the take up of foreign languages*

The Coalition will revive the teaching of foreign languages in Australian schools to ensure that at least 40 per cent of Year 12 students are once more studying a language other than English within a decade.

The teaching of foreign languages in Australian schools has long been in decline. The proportion of Year 12 students studying a foreign language has dropped from about 40 per cent in the 1960s to about 12 per cent today.

China is Australia's biggest trading partner, yet across Australia there are now only about 300 Year 12 Mandarin students who aren't of Chinese heritage.

Japan is Australia's second biggest trading partner and there has been a 21 per cent decline in students studying Japanese since 2001.

Indonesia is a vital partner in Australia's long term future and on current trends Indonesian will disappear from Year 12 studies within four years.



Korean has all but disappeared from our education system - and Korea is our third largest trading partner.

Similarly Australia's relationship with India is of growing importance and the Australian-Indian community numbers more than 300,000. But there has been a steady decline in the study of Hindi in Australia - for example in 2010 only 16 students sat the NSW HSC in Hindi.

The Coalition will reverse this trend and revive the teaching of languages in Australian schools. If Australians are to make their way in the world, we cannot rely on other people speaking our language. Knowing the languages of our key regional partners is vital to unlocking the potential of the Asian century for Australia.

Our plan to support and revive the teaching of languages in Australia involves the following measures:

#### **Continue to prioritise the development of the national languages curriculum for thirteen foreign languages for study in mainstream schools by 2015**

The Coalition will continue the development of national curriculum documents in thirteen language areas being Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Hindi, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish, Turkish, and Vietnamese through the Australian Curriculum Authority. This will mean that all Australian school students will have access to world-class national languages curriculum documents from 2015.

#### **Work with the States and aim to make the study of at least one foreign language from Year 5 to Year 10 compulsory within a decade**

Through the Council of Australian Governments, the Coalition will work to develop a more nationally consistent approach to language learning. As part of this we will ask the States to adopt a national goal so that language education becomes more common from Years 5-10 over the next decade.

#### **Engaging with Teach for Australia to actively recruit for specialist language teachers**

Teach for Australia is an organisation that fast-tracks high calibre non-teaching graduates into disadvantaged schools, through an intensive training programme that leads to a post graduate diploma in teaching. About 20 per cent of Teach for Australia graduates currently specialise in a Language Other Than English but this could be increased to forty per cent through targeted recruitment activities. If elected, we will work with Teach for Australia who will assist with recruitment of outstanding future teachers from the community, including immigrants, bilingual people and other professionals with language skills.

#### **Add specialist language teachers to the Skilled Occupation List**



We will add specialist primary and secondary language teachers to the Skilled Occupation list that will enable education authorities to recruit language teachers when they are unable to do so locally. The Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership will remain the designated assessing authority for teachers for the Skilled Occupation List.

### **Improve teacher training courses to put a focus back on languages**

There are only around 9,500 teachers teaching Languages Other Than English, out of a workforce of some 290,000 teachers. This needs to change if we are to ensure more children have access to language education over the next decade. We will work with universities to ensure that language education is made a high priority in the future criterion of our teachers.

### **Give every preschool child the opportunity to study a foreign language**

The Coalition will commit \$10 million for a one year trial of online language learning for children at pre-school. Early exposure to language learning is an important platform for encouraging language learning in the later years of school education. Delivering this using an online learning environment has significant potential to provide young children with their first foreign language experience quickly and effectively. Such an approach is common in many countries. An estimated 400,000 pre-school children would benefit as part of the online language learning trial for one year.

### **Research the provision of foreign language education across jurisdictions in senior secondary years**

The Coalition will research ways to encourage more secondary students to continue foreign language education in year 11 and 12. Many students don't take a language in the secondary school years because they are worried about competing with native speakers. For example, 95 per cent of students undertaking Mandarin at Year 12 are either native-speakers of Chinese or have Chinese heritage.

Comprehensive research will be an important step towards streamlining language study in secondary years. It will inform all Governments on ways they could reinforce the weightings and other incentives to encourage high school students to continue foreign language study in senior secondary years.

Once concluded, a Coalition government will work with the States to implement these new incentives so that more students will be encouraged to study a language right up until Year 12 and beyond.



#### *d. Revisit the National Curriculum and refocus the Curriculum Authority*

The Coalition will review the National Curriculum and widen the consultative process, to ensure a curriculum that encourages and fosters choice and diversity. We do not see the curriculum as a static document, rather one that gets gradually improved over time.

The move toward a nationally consistent curriculum for school students has been a step in the right direction. However, under Labor the curriculum has become politicised.

For example, the current curriculum suggests that our students are best served learning about the day-to-day activities of trade unions and the history of the Australian Labor Party. For example, the curriculum contains two references to trade unions, four references to progressive ideas and associated movements, and the only Prime Minister to be explicitly referenced is John Curtin.

There is no explicit mention of the conservative parties in the curriculum.

The Coalition will achieve the right balance and ensure that our students learn educational basics and important fundamentals about our nation's history and structure.

To do this, we will:

- review the national curriculum to ensure it is delivering what parents expect;
- pay special attention to the year 11 and 12 curriculum;
- continue work and implementation on curriculum in the areas of:
  - English, maths, science and history
  - health and physical education
  - the arts
  - languages
  - economics and business
  - geography
  - technologies
  - civics and citizenship
- refocus the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority to ensure it is focused on developing the highest possible standard curriculum. We will transfer all data, reporting and compliance functions that are not curriculum related back to the Department of Education – this will free the Authority to direct its resources into developing rigorous benchmarking processes so we can compare our curriculum against the world's best curricula. It will also ensure that we are able to regularly make improvement to the curriculum over time so it remains competitive and



adequately monitor its implementation to be sure it is improving student outcomes as intended.

### *e. Fast NAPLAN turnaround*

The Coalition wants to see NAPLAN results produced faster, a review of the MySchool website, and annual reporting of NAPLAN.

We will ensure that the National Assessment Programme - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is marked and back to parents and teachers within twelve weeks.

Under Labor, NAPLAN goes through a complicated process resulting in various government departments being required to “validate data” that takes months. It has caused test results to not return to schools until nearly five months later.

Taking five months to get a test result back is simply too late.

A five month period means that areas where students might need extra help may not be detected until school is nearly ended for the year. Even then, NAPLAN data is published on a school by school basis - and does not help parents understand the education progress of their own child.

The Coalition believes that it is important to give all schools more flexibility to communicate with parents and the community the outcome of their NAPLAN tests.

We have major concerns about NAPLAN results being published on the My School website and the results being used to name and shame schools.

The Coalition is also deeply concerned about increasing reports of teachers “teaching to the test,” students with a disability being asked to stay home on testing day as to not drag the schools result down and students becoming ill following prolonged periods of test anxiety.

We want to consult further with teachers and the States on options that will see the NAPLAN testing return to a useful diagnostic tool as was intended, and will review the website if elected to government.

In addition, the Coalition will continue the existing work commenced by the State and Territory governments to move as much NAPLAN testing into an online environment as is practicable.

We will publish one annual National NAPLAN Report including analysis for each State and jurisdiction. This will mean that every education authority, researchers and academics will still have access to detailed and meaningful information and comparisons between the performances of education jurisdictions.



## 4. Improved Teacher Quality and Support

The Coalition will work with the State and Territory governments to ensure that our quality of teaching is world class and that teachers have the support they need to succeed.

### *a. Better teacher standards*

The Coalition will improve admission standards in teaching courses by encouraging greater attention to the qualities that make good teachers, such as good communication skills and community service.

We will develop 'best practice' guidelines to improve admission standards into teaching courses that will assist universities to select only the best candidates in the future - based on both their academic achievement and other important factors such as their motivation for a career in teaching.

The Coalition does not believe that 'blunt' approaches to address admission standards into teaching courses, such as proposals to cap Australian Tertiary Admission Ranking (ATAR) scores, are the answer.

The Coalition will continue the work being undertaken by the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership, universities, and the schools sector to develop guidelines that will improve the current admission processes into teaching courses.

These guidelines can be adopted by universities to enhance existing admission processes that includes interviews, a portfolio of community work and application essays.

### *b. Practical skills for new teachers*

The Coalition will work to improve teacher training so that new teacher graduates have the right mix of academic and practical classroom skills.

Many teaching courses are focused on theoretical skills and not the practical skills needed to prepare teachers for actual life in the classroom. The Coalition believes it is important to ensure that all teacher training courses adequately prepare new teachers for the realities of work in modern classrooms. We want them to be equipped with both theoretical and practical skills.

To achieve this, the Coalition will require the Ministerial Advisory Group to provide advice to governments on changes needed to improve teacher training courses. The board will be asked to identify common components that are regarded as being the world's best practice in teacher programmes. It will have a particular focus on the following areas:

- **Pedagogical approaches:** ways of assessing learning related to specific areas and matched to the capabilities of students.



- **Subject content:** knowledge and understanding of school subjects in the primary and secondary curriculum, particularly in relation to foreign languages, mathematics and the sciences.
- **Teaching practicum/practice:** improved university and 'in-school' practice opportunities for student teachers and better support from experienced mentor teachers.

A close examination of international teacher programmes will allow the development of benchmarks against which Australian teacher courses can be assessed.

Once complete, the Ministerial Advisory Group will be asked to review and make suggestions for improvement to the agreed Professional Standards for Teachers and the Education Programs Standards, both of which are administered by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.

This will be an important step in ensuring that Australian teacher training programmes meet and exceed the world's best.

### *c. Flexible pathways into teaching*

The Coalition will work to explore more flexible pathways into teaching that are not bound by traditional training streams.

The Productivity Commission, through its Schools Workforce Report, noted that the promotion of alternative pathways into the teaching profession that do not involve the traditional training can assist in overcoming teaching shortages. However, current national accreditation standards developed by the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership do not allow anyone without a discipline-specific qualification to enter a postgraduate teacher education course.

According to the Productivity Commission, these restrictions have limited the number of people able to participate in independent programmes, like Teach for Australia, that attract high quality candidates who may not have otherwise considered a career in education. However, some States will not recognise Teach for Australia graduates as meeting the accreditation standards needed to become a teacher.

The Productivity Commission proposed that the existing national accreditation standards could be amended to ensure that skills developed in highly-related degrees and professions could be considered in assessing whether candidates have the required discipline-specific knowledge to enter postgraduate teaching courses and to subsequently obtain appropriate accreditation.

The Coalition will work with the States and promote alternative career pathways into teaching within the context of reviewing the professional teaching standards linked to accreditation.



#### *d. Enhanced professional development for school leaders*

The Coalition believes strong school leadership will be essential if autonomous systems of schooling are to be successful.

The importance of autonomy is also noted by the Principals associations of Government, Catholic and Independent primary and secondary schools:

*“Autonomy is transformational and contextual. Professional, operational and personal autonomy for school leaders enables them to improve school and student performance in collaboration with their school community. It requires school leaders to understand the changing global environment and to have ‘the freedom to innovate and the capacity to act. With autonomy, the capacity of school leaders to transform, personalise learning, embed partnerships, optimise teacher performance and drive sustainable school improvement is enriched and shared through networks of professional support.”*

A high performing principal has the capacity to turn around a struggling school in just a few short years with the right support.

Principals have an educational background but they often struggle with the day to day aspects of running a school, such as balancing administration, finance, human resources, and asset management.

High achieving school systems overseas emphasise the need for high-quality and intensive training of school leaders.

Giving school principals even more support will be important if more autonomous models of schooling are to be successful.

If elected, a Coalition government will work to develop a new school leadership programme. This will be modeled around an MBA-style executive education programme with a focus on world class school leadership techniques.

We will work extensively with the States, professional associations and the schools sector to ensure that this school leadership programme will be regarded as the best in Australia.

The actual cost of taking the course will be met by employers or the employee.

Because every school will get an increase in school funding over the next four years under our fairer funding plan, we hope that the development of this new qualification will provide school leaders with the extra incentive to invest in themselves.



## The Choice

Labor came to power in 2007 promising 'nothing less than a revolution in education' and vowing to make it their top priority in government.

Kevin Rudd's Computers in Schools programme, the centrepiece of Labor's 2007 election campaign has been sent to the policy dustbin. The Coalition warned that such technology was likely to grow obsolete under Labor's ill-conceived and expensive programme. Labor promised to spend \$1 billion on the computers, but then oversaw \$1.4 billion in blow-outs delivering a total taxpayers cost of \$2.4 billion.

Now the programme has been cut entirely, meaning no extra funding is available to states or non-government schools for new computers or maintenance for existing computers.

The Building the Education Revolution programme was plagued by rip-offs and rorts to the tune of \$6-8 billion - problems that would have been minimised, if not eliminated, had the Government entrusted school communities with the management of their own projects rather than channelling the money through state government bureaucracies.

By imposing prescriptive guidelines, many schools have been forced to accept buildings they didn't want and can't use. For instance, Holland Park State School in Queensland received \$1.5 million for a new library even though it already had one.

Labor's reforms such as the public reporting of each school's national testing results on the My School website has not transformed Australian schools as promised. In fact performance in international testing has even further declined while there have been only marginal improvements in national testing results across the board.

Labor has done very little to support or reward teachers. Not a single teacher received a \$10,000 bonus as promised at the last election and the policy has since been dumped.

An independent performance audit of Labor's \$540 million literacy and numeracy programme that examined national testing data from 2008 to 2011 concluded the programme is yet to make a statistically significant improvement in literacy and numeracy in any State.

If the effectiveness of Labor's education revolution is to be measured by how well these programmes have performed, then the results are hardly encouraging. The Government is simply not delivering on what matters - improving student outcomes across the board.



## Cost

The Coalition's *Policy for Schools: Students First* will invest an additional \$120 million to improve schools and education outcomes for students. Our \$120 million investment is on top of schools funding already committed to in the Budget.

There will be no cut to school funding under a Coalition government.



Hope.  
Reward.  
Opportunity.



**THE NATIONALS** *for Regional Australia*

For further details of the Coalition's Plan go to  
[www.realsolutions.org.au](http://www.realsolutions.org.au)