

Funding Issues

SES Model

There was a review of the model in 2006, but the results of the review have not been released. At the moment it seems that the SES model will continue to be the basis of funding for the 2009/13 Quadrennium. Kevin Rudd and Stephen Smith have made a commitment to the continuing use of the Average Government School Recurrent Cost as the basis for calculating funding and to ongoing supplementation of per capita grants. The ALP, if elected, will review the model with a view to significant changes for the 2013/17 Quadrennium.

Students with Disabilities

The Federal Government has initiated research into the funding of students with disabilities. Both the present Government and the Opposition have identified this as an area to which additional funding should be committed.

Education Agendas

Education has become a significant policy area for the Council of Australian Government (COAG). The issue has progressed beyond funding although this remains a political issue. For COAG the issues revolve around the contribution that education makes to the economy.

Both the Coalition and the ALP promote the development of a national curriculum in key subject areas for example, English, History, Mathematics and the Sciences. The change from State/Territory based Literacy and Numeracy Benchmark Testing at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 to a National Testing system is supported by both major parties and begins in 2008. COAG has also agreed to develop a core of nationally consistent teacher standards for Literacy and Numeracy.



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The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia

SchoolsFunding

**Allocation of funds from state
and federal government towards
the independent and govern-
ment sectors leading up to the
next election.**

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Funding Principles

The independent school sector believes that government funding models for education should reflect three fundamental concepts:

- Individual **choice** in schooling.
- **Diversity** of schooling options.
- Committed **partnerships** between schools, parents and governments.

To support these concepts, the following principles should underpin schools' funding policies:

- A **basic entitlement** for all students
- Additional **needs-based support** to recognise relative educational disadvantage of students, including students with disabilities, students from non-English speaking backgrounds, indigenous students, and students from rural and remote areas.
- **Stability** for families and schools.
- Annual **indexation**.

The essential criteria for public funding structures for non-government schools are:

- **Equity** - schools serving similar communities should generally be funded at similar levels.
- **Incentive** - governments should support students in a way that encourages, not discourages, parental investment in schooling.
- **Flexibility** - schools should not be locked into a particular funding level, impeding them from responding to changes in their school community.
- **Transparency** - the relative need of schools should be assessed on reliable and transparent data.
- **Simplicity** - the funding arrangement should be simple to administer, with low administration costs for both government and schools.
- **Predictability** - it is important that there is a high degree of stability and certainty in school funding arrangements to assist schools with their financial planning and management.

Government Funding 2007

On average, parents and donors in independent schools in 2005 contributed 87% of funds for capital developments such as school buildings, grounds and equipment.

Independent committees called Block Grant Authorities in each state and territory administer capital grants for non-government schools on behalf of the Australian Government.

Australian Government Funding

Australian Government per capita funding is based on the Socio-Economic Status (SES) Scheme, which measures the relative socio-economic status of independent school communities and links this to an index called the Average Government Schools Recurrent Cost (AGSRC). Changes in the recurrent costs of educating a student in a government school, as measured by the AGSRC, are the basis for annual increases in Australian Government funding for both government and non-government schools.

State Government Funding

Overall, state and territory governments provide 27% of total government recurrent funding for independent schools. However the levels of funding for schools and methods used to assess them vary between states and territories.

Registered non-government schools qualify for various forms of State Government financial assistance. The major area of assistance is provided through the payment of per capita grants. The State Government also provides additional assistance for students with identified special learning needs especially those with severe or multiple disabilities who are eligible for a special per capita grant. In addition the state government supports capital development projects at non-government schools through the Low Interest Loans Scheme (LILS).

SES

The SES score for a school is derived by matching the address of each student attending the school to an Australian Bureau of Statistics Census Collection District (CCD). Data on income level, occupation and level of education from the CCDs in which the students live are combined to produce the SES score. SES scores range from 75 to more than 135 nationally, and in Western Australia from 75 to 125.

Schools with an SES score of 85 or below receive 70% of the AGSRC amount.

Schools with an SES score of 130 or above receive 13.7% of the AGSRC amount.

