



Australian Council of State School Organisations Ltd.

One voice for every child in public education

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Gonski 2.0: The difference a day makes

A year ago the Prime Minister, flanked by Simon Birmingham and David Gonski, took us by surprise declaring that there would be a new education review with an independent Review Panel and Secretariat, to be led by David Gonski.

This may have resolved some unfinished business for David Gonski due to the constraints of the first review of 2011 that limited its deliberations to funding, and not how it should be allocated to maximise learning gain. The Review Panel's task was to define education excellence in our schools and determine where the best use of resources can be made for the greatest impact on learning.

This Monday we saw the same trio speaking of the findings of the review; complete with its new and highly aspirational prefix 'Through Growth to Achievement'. Without diving into the detail of the report, I can't help but admire the scope of its considerations in what is a holistic national vision for the future of education. It seems I'm not alone as it appears to be garnering strong support from all sides.

There is no surprise in this, as the report is a considered and extensive discussion of what should be possible and why it must happen. It offers no detailed instruction on how it should be delivered at a grass-roots level, instead leaving that for the Commonwealth Government and the States and territories to negotiate. This could be its Achilles' heel as this is the point where the detail of how, what and by when of implementing its recommendations will be resolved. Within this there will naturally be an overtone of how the suggested reforms will be resourced, by whom and by when.

To initiate the delivery of what is hoped to be a lasting change the Federal Minister will be meeting with his state and territory colleagues this coming Friday. In this special meeting the Education Council will discuss the review's ambitious recommendations in a declared spirit of cooperation and collaboration; for the benefit of all our children I hope this can be maintained by all sides.

If we pause to reflect on this approach it's deeply gratifying to note the report recognises the value of collaborative and supportive partnerships at all levels, offering a broad and sustainable foundation for future improvement, perhaps one that can go on to imbue all future policy deliberations, particularly those which will determine how the recommendations are implemented.

As a nation, we have an extraordinarily diverse range of cultures and traditions. The report is a unique opportunity for all sides to focus on the possibilities for our children, especially the needs of families that have chosen public education as the first choice for their child's future. With inclusivity, collaboration and partnership as our watchwords it's their future, our future and our nation's future that's at stake; there has to be tangible hope with resourcing to match, and all sides must embrace the potential within this.

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