

Media Release

Invest in instructional leaders, not magic bullets, Catholic Schools tell Gonski #2

School funding could significantly improve student learning if it were used to develop more teachers and principals as instructional leaders, Catholic Schools NSW (CSNSW) said today.

In its submission to the *Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools*, chaired by David Gonski – also known as the Gonski 2 review – CSNSW also called for the development of school-based improvement plans and the promotion of explicit teaching.

The review is investigating how funding can improve school performance and student outcomes.

“There is no ‘magic bullet’. We need to take a multi-faceted approach,” CSNSW chief executive officer Dallas McInerney said.

A key intervention that has worked in Catholic schools has been engaging teacher educators to train other teachers and principals as ‘instructional leaders’, Mr McInerney said.

“Instructional leaders have had great results in schools identified as underperforming, based on assessment measures such as NAPLAN.

“Our sector has refined this strategy further in its implementation of the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan since 2012,” he said.

Other initiatives recommended to the Gonski 2 review include:

- the development of school-based improvement plans linked to systemic support networks
- the promotion of explicit teaching
- implementation of tiered interventions linked to syllabus-based learning fields
- use of formative and diagnostic assessments, and
- increased teacher collaborative planning.

Mr McInerney said Catholic education also advocated a school-by-school based approach where teachers worked collaboratively to analyse student data to improve individual and collective results.

“It’s about attracting the right people to become teachers, developing them into effective educators, then resourcing each school so that it can deliver the most appropriate instruction for every child, with a focus on early intervention to address learning needs.”

Mr McInerney said Catholic schools set out to develop the potential of all students, irrespective of their abilities, interests and needs.

“We need to recognise the importance of school culture - particularly the unifying ethos and purpose that comes with schools that belong to faith-based systems. Culture helps build parent and community support for schooling, which in turn benefits student learning.”

CSNSW represents NSW’s 591 Catholic schools, which educate one in five NSW students. It will fully assume this important role from Catholic Education Commission NSW from 1 January 2018.

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