

Primary School Principals say it's time for some long-term thinking

The Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) believes the time has come to build our nation's future by thinking long-term, focusing on the primary school years and acting now.

APPA President, Dennis Yarrington, said that national political leaders must prioritise investing in our primary schools before it's too late for far too many children.

"As Australia hits the halfway point of this election campaign it is increasingly obvious that we must move away from the three or four year political cycles. Schools would be far better positioned to embed the innovation and flexibility needed in tomorrow's world, if long-term thinking shaped today's action.

"Long ago, someone could leave school unable to read and write and still get by. He or she could find a job and live a reasonable life. We know this is no longer possible.

"The research shows that, if a child experiences difficulties in these early years and has not received the intensive, ongoing support to achieve in the classroom, by Year 9 it is virtually impossible for that child to catch up. My high school colleagues know this, employers try and fill the gaps, and parents see the result in their homes.

"The intensive support that works does cost money today but saves money in the long run. We must challenge the notion that educating a primary student can be done on the cheap."

Mr Yarrington said that at last week's Trans-Tasman Principals Conference in Auckland, APPA's National Advisory Council, made up of school principals representing over 7,200 primary school communities, reinforced its longstanding school funding position.

"Investment in early and sustained intervention reaps the greatest reward and is best met when the funding is needs based, sector blind, transparent and predictable. Funding certainty at the right level is crucial to providing this intervention in our primary schools.

"APPA recommends increasing the primary student base rate as a means of achieving this goal."

APPA is the professional association representing over 7,200 Government, Catholic and Independent primary school principals across Australia.

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