



Public submission made to the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools

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Submitting as a: Student, Teacher
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Summary

Students need to be supported by teachers knowledgeable in their areas and by sufficient, quality resources. I believe the barrier to this is a lack of school support for teachers to engage in professional development in public schools, and limited funding in areas other than English and Mathematics.

Main submission

During my time student-teaching at a public school in Melbourne (which I will not identify), I informally interviewed teachers and discovered that funding which had been allocated towards the subject 'English as an Additional Language' was actually being reappropriated to other departments which the school deemed as more important. For context, the EAL department at this school was/is severely underfunded, resulting in severely limited resources for students. In a class of 15~ students, the class will be required to share amongst them 3~5 books of a certain (often outdated) text to read/analyse. This is a difficult situation for both students and teachers, and has directly resulted in low comprehension of text for these learners. I found that this is not an uncommon practice, nor is it confined to this particular school. This is alarming considering the recent increases in refugee and migrant students in Australia and Melbourne in particular.

I feel that the provision of funding for EAL should be increased if possible, and that funding should certainly be more strictly observed to ensure it reaches the designated departments. With increased funding, I suggest the EAL departments to use this to improve resources and for schools to support the professional development of EAL teachers in accordance with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL), Standards 1, 3, 6, and 7.