

SCHOOL FUNDING

Some deserve a cut, says Collier

Daniel Emerson

Education Minister Peter Collier says low socioeconomic or under-performing schools that lose money under the Government's student-centred funding model from next year are "getting what they deserve".

Mr Collier made the remarks after Education Department data on funding changes for more than 700 WA public primary and secondary schools showed 70 per cent would be better off under the new model and 30 per cent worse off.

Some schools losing money over the five-year transition from next year include the low socioeconomic Girrawheen Senior High School (\$1.4 million) and Belmont City College (\$1.1 million).

The model provides a base funding level for every child, with loadings for Aboriginal or

disadvantaged students. The location of schools is taken into account.

Asked whether it was a good look for lower socioeconomic schools to be losing money, Mr Collier said the new model was a level playing field. "With regard to those schools in lower socioeconomic areas, they will receive the funding they deserve on a per capita basis and also on the five (loadings) criteria," he said.

"A school which has a complex mix of students from a low and a high socioeconomic area in the current system would be labelled according to one (set of) criteria.

"What we are doing now is we have identified each individual child. Schools are getting what they deserve."

Mr Collier said it was "simply unacceptable" for two WA public schools which were "a mirror image of each other"

3km to 5km apart having vastly different budgets.

WA State School Teachers Union president Pat Byrne said the union supported the model but objected to it being introduced without extra funding, citing \$200 million in recurrent funding stripped from the education budget in 2014-15.

Ms Byrne said the union did not support \$45 million over five years being redistributed from high schools to primary schools.

That put her at odds with WA Primary Principals Association president Stephen Breen, who said \$45 million amounted to an "embarrassing" one per cent of the overall education budget.

Shadow education minister Sue Ellery said Labor could never support taking money off struggling schools or funding early education at the expense of secondary schools.

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