

# FEDERATION OF PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATIONS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

## *POSITION PAPER - Literacy and Numeracy*

Literacy and numeracy are of major importance in each child's education. They are prerequisites for effective participation in society, full personal development and ongoing access to our cultural heritage. All children are entitled to the learning experiences, intervention programs and support services which will enable them to achieve a standard of literacy and numeracy which will enable them to function actively and effectively within our society. Parents play an important role in learning and it is essential that they receive appropriate support in providing an environment that will promote literacy and numeracy learning. Schools and other agencies can assist parents to provide this environment. However, the responsibility for literacy and numeracy acquisition lies with the school. It is the obligation of governments to ensure that schools can carry out this responsibility.

P&C Federation supports the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017-2020 as a framework to improve literacy and numeracy. However, the NSW Government must establish a permanent state-wide strategy to support literacy and numeracy once the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017-2020 has run its course. Among the factors such a strategy must address are how to ensure teachers meet the highest possible literacy and numeracy standards, and how supports will be provided to schools with poor literacy and numeracy performances.

### **Background**

- Problems in literacy and numeracy can become entrenched from a young age, and can become harder to overcome with age.
- Explicit teaching rather than self-directed learning is the most effective in effectively teaching literacy and numeracy.
- There are consistent gaps in teachers' experience and confidence in teaching mathematics.
- PISA scores indicate that reading literacy scores in Australia declined 12 points from PISA 2009-2015. In NSW, NSW had a 36 point decline in average reading literacy scores between PISA 2000 and 2015, the 3rd largest decline of all states/territories.
- The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017-2020 is an effort to boost increase the proportion of NSW students in the top two NAPLAN bands for reading and numeracy by 8% by 2019.]\
- The strategy pledges \$340 million over four years to 673 schools, 533 of which are government schools, toward early intervention and instructional leadership. However, there is little indication which schools these are, and therefore whether this distribution is the most equitable. It is also not clear as to whether the instructional leadership program has been effective in tackling problems in numeracy and literacy

### **Additional Resources**

Thomson et al. 2016. PISA 2015: A first look at Australia's results. Australian Council for Educational Research.  
<http://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=ozpisa>

NSW Department of Education.2016. Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017-2020.  
<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/about-us/literacy-numeracy/literacy-and-numeracy-strategy.pdf>