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Media release: Literacy and Numeracy Panel's report a game changer for ACT public schools

The Australian Education Union ACT Branch welcomes the findings from the Expert Panel's inquiry into literacy and numeracy in ACT public schools.

AEU ACT Branch President Angela Burroughs said, "We thank the Panel for its consultative approach and its genuine engagement with the school leaders and teachers who work tirelessly every day to provide a great learning experience for the ACT's 50,000 public school students."

"Our members are the people who will be responsible for implementing changes emerging from this review. We appreciate that the Panel has listened to and respected their views."

Ms Burroughs said, "The AEU was uniquely placed to represent the voices of our 4,200 members who know what their students need. Our recommendations came from our membership. AEU members told the Panel that they wanted the Education Directorate to establish centralised curriculum support, implement uniform system-wide capture of student assessment data, ensure every school can offer small group intensive learning to help struggling students catch up, and improve communication with parents."

"We are pleased to see that the Panel has agreed with our members on these crucial matters."

"The Panel has identified a need for a more consistent approach to curriculum, teaching and assessment across our school system. It makes the case that greater system consistency is essential to improving literacy and numeracy outcomes and helping to reduce teacher workload."

Ms Burroughs said, "The Panel noted that ACT schools have a proud history of great diversity in its education system. However, it said that this must evolve to ensure greater consistency and to make real inroads to reduce the workload of teachers and school leaders."

"It is important to note that this doesn't mean ACT public schools will adopt a highly prescribed, 'one size fits all' approach. The Panel's report is distinguished by its balancing of the need for greater system support to provide consistency and its respect for teacher professionalism to tailor resources and activities to support the students that they know best. The Panel has said that schools should continue to innovate, but should be supported to do so collaboratively."

In terms of next steps, the Panel has provided comprehensive implementation advice.

Ms Burroughs said, "We know that for reform to be effective, it must be resourced and supported by the profession. We urge the ACT Government to fully resource the implementation plan and to continue the constructive, consultative approach taken by this review process. By properly resourcing the implementation plan, the Minister will be sending a clear message to teachers that they matter; to prospective teachers that they will be very well supported in ACT public schools; and to the community, that ACT public schools are great places for all children to learn."

Media contact: Angela Burroughs, ph. 6272 7900, aeuact@aeuact.org.au