



**PRESS RELEASE: EMBARGOED UNTIL
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Parents want tutors in schools

The results of the recent National Tutoring Survey of Parents has indicated that parents spend between \$3,000 and \$5,000 per year on tutoring and they use it to boost the self-confidence and competence of their children.

Survey respondents also wanted tax deductibility for the cost of private tutoring (49%) and 85% believed that training standards (accreditation) mattered.

SIGNIFICANTLY, 86% of parents surveyed also indicated that they want mainstream school to utilise appropriately accredited tutors for the remediation of illiteracy and innumeracy.

The issue of illiteracy and innumeracy

PISA results, NAPLAN data and other measures of educational performance have consistently revealed that at least 11-25% of Australian children and below the very lowest benchmarks of what is acceptable. Surveys of adult illiteracy indicate that over 45% of adults are functionally illiterate. This means that throughout their schooling these people were not identified, not supported and not managed. The ATA believes that this situation is unnecessary, untenable and that it can be remediated.

ATA CEO Mohan Dhall said, *“The evidence is clear. Successive increases to public funding has not in any way changed the national picture in terms of illiteracy and innumeracy. Children are coming to school illiterate and leaving twelve years later with no relative improvement. We believe that the voices of families should be listened to. Families want the situation addressed and it is in the national interest for governments and businesses to do so in ways that create meaningful outcomes. We need to work together support the remediation of illiteracy and innumeracy on economic and social grounds.”*

The ATA is calling on businesses and government to support a new approach to remediating illiteracy and innumeracy through the use of specialist accredited tutors through public-private partnerships. These partnerships would operate through a charity to avoid any commercialisation and would solely focus on the best interests of the child in need of support.

NAPLAN and PISA data, amongst other studies such as PIAAC, consistently demonstrate serious issues in regards to up 45% of adults being functionally illiterate and at least 11-25% of children leaving school illiterate and/or innumerate.

Various governments have tried to remediate this issue such as:

- Australia through An Even Start (AES) – ended in 2008
- USA through the 'No Child Left Behind' policy – successful when parents were given choice about the allocation of the tuition money
- UK through its Pupil Bonus – reportedly successful

In each case, the government allocates funds for the use of tutors to remediate the issues. The proposed model seeks to use data about illiteracy and innumeracy to gain a clear picture about who needs support. The schools have this data available as does ACARA. The specialised accredited tutors then would work with teachers to support the learning needs of the identified children.

“I hope that business would support this idea and would support the concept. No nation in any part of the world has taken this approach and I believe it is incumbent on the 'clever country' to come up with innovative solutions for serious social and economic issues,” Dhall said.

The ATA is of the view that a mixed public-private model would bring the best of both sectors together whilst placing the educational interests of the child at the centre.

As regards the legitimate concerns of teaching unions Dhall said, *“Public-private partnerships should be supervised by schools and teachers, such that accountability vests with the communities to whom it most matters. The current situation of increased investment without increased accountability and improving standards is not what schools need.”*

The ATA National Parent Survey found the following:

- 35% of parents surveyed have used a tutor for the child for over 1 year
- 54% of parents surveyed spend \$51-\$60 per week on tutoring. A further 18.4% spend between \$101 and \$150 per week on tutoring
- Small group and one-to-one tuition is the preferred mode of delivery for tuition services for children in Year 10 and below
- Most parents are not prepared to spend more than \$100 for online materials or tuition
- For families that use computer-based resources, English and mathematics are the subjects most supplemented through the use of such technologies
- 91% of parents believe that tutoring boost a child's self-confidence
- 93.5% believe that tutoring supports a child's specific and individual needs
- 82% of parents say that tutoring gives their child predictable academic support and
- 84% believe the investment supports their parenting in the educational space

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