



## PRESS RELEASE

### Choice better for tutoring catch up

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The ATA welcome the NSW Government's decision to assist students affected by learning loss through its \$337m investment in tutoring. However, the program rollout should not be rushed. The massive spend should be very carefully calibrated to assist students most affected through learning loss. Key features of the program should be tutor accountability, training, parent choice and testing.

#### **Accountability, training and testing**

The features of an accountable investment in a targeted tutoring program are:

- Accountability
- Training
- Parent choice through tuition vouchers
- Testing

#### **Tutor accountability – public private partnerships**

More funding without accountability will not remediate learning loss. Those suffering highest levels of learning loss are students most vulnerable throughout their schooling years. Evidence over the past decade of NAPLAN has shown that these **students have not benefitted at all with greater public investment in schools**. It is appropriate to involve the private sector in key areas such as:

- Training tutors
- Assisting in the setting of accountability standards
- Designing programs for remediation

Private sector accountability must be a feature of any massive investment into education designed to assist those most in need of catch up.

#### **Training/qualification**

This is an essential element of any tutoring program. ATA CEO Mohan Dhall said, *“training pre-service teachers, and working with retired teachers...both of these groups have expressed interest in the tutoring program. However, both groups have stated they need to be specifically trained in tutoring in small group and one-to-one. In addition, tutors must be trained in working with students with Learning Difficulties which is different to working with students with conceptual misunderstandings due to COVID and school absence.*

*“In my experience, casual teachers may not be best suited to this program as they need to support students in their designated area of training. If they are tutoring students in schools outside of their designated teaching area this could be disastrous for the program”*

The ATA is designing a training program for tutors assisting them in specialised areas such as:

- How to tutor to manage learning loss
- Tutoring in literacy
- Tutoring in numeracy

### **Parent choice through tuition vouchers**

Many students who are left behind equate school with stress. A well-crafted program should allow flexibility to use approved outside private providers. This can be done by giving parents money in the form of tutoring vouchers. Parents should have the choice to decide how they would like their child's learning loss ameliorated. Private providers would work closely with schools and be subject to very high standards of accountability.

Dhall said, "*Given choice, most parents would not necessarily choose the school for the site for the remediation of issues. Many parents report to use that routine learning loss occurs in schools. If the system is so good at addressing learning issues, give parents tuition vouchers and see where they spend it.*"

### **Testing**

Where relevant, psychometric educational testing should be used to establish a baseline that informs both the school and the tutors of the student's cognitive strength and weakness. The tutoring should be calibrated to accommodate evidence brought from such instruments.

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