

Great teachers = Great results

A direct action plan for Queensland schools

Premier and Minister's foreword



The State Government is committed to ensuring all Queensland children get a quality education.

We know from international research that student outcomes are closely linked to the quality of the instruction they receive in the classroom. As such, our teachers are the most important resource we have to give young Queenslanders the best possible start in life.

The State Government invests \$6 billion per annum in education funding supported by \$2.7 billion from the Commonwealth Government.

To support this investment we need to find better ways to improve the status of teachers, reward our high performing teachers with accelerated career pathways, and ensure struggling schools have access to the highest performing teachers — and we're prepared to pay for it. These new strategies, when fully implemented will be an additional investment of \$535 million in Queensland's education system over the first four years commencing in 2015.

The State Government will also expand school autonomy, giving schools greater freedom to direct their resources to the programs that best meet the needs of their students. We will give schools and principals greater power to discipline students and keep their focus on the core business of teaching and learning.

These initiatives will build on the good work we have already done over the past 12 months to create a great education system for our great state.

Queensland's schooling system — across state and non-state schools — will help to unlock the state's potential, secure its future economic prosperity and provide our young people with brighter futures.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Campbell Newman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Hon Campbell Newman MP
Premier of Queensland

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John-Paul Langbroek". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Hon John-Paul Langbroek MP
Minister for Education, Training
and Employment

Introduction

Education is central to the economic prosperity of our great state and it creates opportunities for every Queensland student. The Queensland Government is committed to supporting schools in boosting educational outcomes for young Queenslanders.

Research is clear that higher funding in itself does not guarantee student success. The relationship between increased school funding and student performance is not consistent. Over the last decade the Federal Government has increased funding to education by 85 per cent and yet we have not seen demonstrable changes in results¹. Governments cannot keep pouring money into underperforming programs and expect different results.

In the current environment we must efficiently use every dollar invested in education.

For this reason, the Queensland Government will not increase funding for poorly targeted and untested programs. Rather, we need to focus every dollar on the things that work and be prepared to innovate in the pursuit of excellence.

The Queensland Government rejects the proposition that national solutions will achieve universally improved educational outcomes. One-size-fits-all proposals unnecessarily increase bureaucracy and weigh schools down with excessive reporting and red tape. Perversely, this will negatively impact on schools in areas of disadvantage that should be concentrating on supporting the complex needs of their students.

The Queensland education system must accommodate small one-teacher schools in remote areas of the bush and large, multicultural urban schools. Queensland's 1717 schools present a unique challenge for the Queensland Government and our 57 000 teachers to develop constructive strategies to consistently deliver a high standard of education.

Great teachers = Great results builds on the strengths of Queensland's existing school funding model and extends the Queensland Government's reform agenda by focusing on the most important piece of the education system — the teacher. There are many hard working teachers in Queensland schools and it is what they do, day in, day out, that impacts on a student's performance.

Rather than becoming side-tracked by political slogans, the Queensland Government is delivering innovative solutions to achieve results. By concentrating new funds on policies backed with research and challenging out-dated orthodoxies, we can achieve great outcomes at a fraction of the cost.

Great teachers = Great results recognises that each of Queensland's schooling sectors knows its schools best. The Queensland Government will work closely with its partners — the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland — to bring about change and direct resources where they are most needed. We will do this in a way that respects each sector's experience in representing its schools and acknowledges that what works well in one system or school may not be the optimal solution in another.

How Queensland schools are faring

The vast majority of Queensland students are achieving outcomes that establish them well for future learning and for life. At the end of schooling in 2012, 94 per cent of students received either a Queensland Certificate of Education, a Vocational Education and Training (VET) Certificate, an International Baccalaureate Diploma, or were engaged in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

Queensland has consistently improved since National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests began in 2008. In 2012, across all year levels and NAPLAN test areas, nine out of 10 Queensland students, on average, met or exceeded national standards.

However, despite substantial investment and some improvement, Queensland is still behind the other states and territories. The Queensland Government has made a commitment to rectify this situation and make Queensland a high ranking state.

Queensland schooling must continue to improve to ensure that our state can fully unlock its potential, secure its future economic prosperity and provide our young people with brighter futures.

Queensland's current reform agenda

Queensland faces challenging circumstances for delivering education and it has been necessary for us to innovate to achieve results.

Since coming to office, the Queensland Government has been getting on with the job of transforming school education, building on the strengths of the current system and investing in the greatest opportunities for improvement and renewal.

Building on the Queensland Government's already significant investment in school infrastructure, the table below highlights the important reform agenda it has been implementing, from its first two six-month action plans, to boost education across the state.

Priority reforms in school education

Independent Public Schools	The first 26 Independent Public Schools began operating under the new model in 2013
Advancing our Schools Maintenance Fund	The Queensland Government has committed \$300 million to address the maintenance backlog in Queensland state schools
Queensland Schools Planning Commission	The Schools Planning Commission was established in 2012 to advise the Queensland Government on matters relating to strategic planning for school infrastructure
Boosting Prep	Over four years, 150 prep classes will benefit from the equivalent of a full-time teacher aide in the classroom during school hours. We know that quality first experiences in the classroom lead to better outcomes throughout a student's life
Getting the basics right	Schools are receiving up to \$26 million over four years to select tailored literacy and numeracy programs matched to the needs of their students
Step Up into Education	\$4 million over four years to better prepare children to make the transition to school and support parental involvement in their child's education
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander action plan	In mid-2013, the Queensland Government will release its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan, focusing on early years, school education and training commitments for Indigenous Queenslanders
Speech and language pathologists	More speech and language pathologists are being provided in the state school network for students with learning difficulties, at a cost of \$9.5 million over three years

Tablet computers	Identified special schools and state schools with special education programs have each received 20 iPads or tablet computers
Chaplaincy in schools	An additional \$1 million was allocated to support the Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care Funding Program
Review of non-state school regulation	A review of the regulation of non-state schools is occurring in 2013 to ensure it remains efficient, responsive and relevant
Review of Overall Position score	A review of the Overall Position tertiary entrance score is commencing in 2013
Review of the Queensland Studies Authority	A review of the <i>Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002</i> is considering the functions, structure and governance of the Queensland Studies Authority
Review of the Grammar Schools Act	The legislation, regulation and operations of grammar schools under the <i>Grammar Schools Act</i> are being reviewed

The Queensland Government has also pledged to restore accountability in government. A key part of this pledge is the open data revolution, through which as much government data as possible is being released for use by the community at no cost. This includes school-related data that is useful to parents, schools and the broader community.

Queensland releases NAPLAN data by school each year and provides comprehensive Year 12 outcomes and student destination data. We publish enrolment and attendance data and contribute to the release of data through the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) MySchool website.

The next wave of reform

The Queensland Government believes that the most effective way to improve student outcomes is to lift the quality of the teacher in front of the class. For this reason, *Great teachers = Great results* focuses the next wave of reform on two critical areas:

1. Professional excellence in teaching — elevating teaching standards across the board, rewarding high performance and positioning the highest performing teachers where they are needed most; and
2. Boosting school autonomy — empowering and enabling school leaders and teachers to drive outcomes for students.

The current status	The future status
There is a limited performance assessment process for teachers and school leaders	Annual performance reviews will identify high performing teachers and determine where more effort is needed to lift performance at the individual, school and system levels
Mentoring opportunities for new teachers are not delivered consistently across the state	An accredited mentoring program will match beginning teachers with experienced high performing teachers in the classroom
The current process for becoming an experienced senior teacher lacks rigour	There will be more rigorous application requirements for moving from the senior teacher to experienced senior teacher classification
Processes for progression through teaching ranks don't allow for fast-tracked advancement	Fast-tracked career advancement opportunities will be available to accelerate high performing, Masters degree qualified teachers to the experienced senior teacher classification
Struggling schools don't receive extra help	300 new Master Teacher positions will be created to ensure quality teachers are working where they are needed most
There is not enough support provided for literacy and numeracy in the early years	Each primary school with a Master Teacher will receive a resource package of up to \$75 000 over three years to support literacy and numeracy in the early years
There are limitations on recognising and rewarding high performing staff	Principals can access funds from a bonus pool to reward their top teachers and staff
Unlike leadership positions in many other industries, principals don't receive performance bonuses	Principals on fixed-term contracts will be eligible for a bonus, dependent on their performance
There is no incentive for school leaders to focus on continuous improvement	Performance-based, fixed-term contracts for principals and deputy principals will encourage ongoing improvement and accountability

<p>There is little support for teachers and school leaders to undertake further study</p>	<p>Up to 200 scholarships will be offered each year to high performing teachers to undertake a Masters degree in a relevant field</p> <p>Principals and deputy principals will be offered a scholarship to undertake a graduate certificate in a relevant field</p>
<p>Schools currently do not have enough autonomy</p>	<p>All schools will have the opportunity to become independent over time</p> <p>We will remove union representatives from principal selection panels</p> <p>Drawing on the experiences of high performing principals, schools will develop the capacity to exercise greater autonomy</p>
<p>Schools are required to be safe and supportive environments, though principals are weighed down by red tape in dealing with difficult behaviour</p>	<p>Stronger powers and streamlined processes for suspensions and exclusions will strengthen discipline in state schools</p>

Professional excellence in teaching

Elevating teaching standards across the board, rewarding high performance and positioning the highest performing teachers where they are needed most

Effective teachers are the key to improving student learning, with teachers accounting for around 30 per cent of the variance in student achievement². This variation in student achievement is three to four times bigger than the variance caused by student background or ability³. It is well recognised that the highest achieving nations make substantial investments in the quality of teaching in schools⁴.

The 2010 Grattan Institute report, *Investing in Our Teachers, Investing in Our Economy*, argues that teacher effectiveness has a greater impact on student performance than any other government school education reform and that an increase in teacher effectiveness of 10 per cent would lift Australia's education systems into the highest performing countries in the world⁵.

A recent New South Wales Government research report stated that 'a student with a teacher in the top 10 per cent of teachers in the country could achieve in half a year what a student with a teacher in the bottom 10 per cent of effectiveness takes a full year to achieve'⁶.

The Queensland Government has advocated strongly for reforms to teacher training, assessment and induction. The Federal Government recently announced that its proposed National Plan for School Improvement will include a number of activities associated with teacher pre-service testing and training. This will include a more rigorous admissions process to qualify for entry into an initial teaching degree, pre-graduation literacy and numeracy testing, a national approach to teacher training and a review of teaching courses. The Queensland Government welcomes the initiatives announced by the Federal Government to work with universities to improve the rigour of teacher training courses.

The Queensland Government recognises the great work that teachers across the state do every day. We want to make a greater investment in Queensland's teaching profession to make it one of the best in the world. This is a long-term vision for all teachers in this state. The targeted actions outlined below are specific to the state school sector. However, to improve teaching standards across the board, the Queensland Government will work with the Catholic and independent schooling sectors to share experience and resources. They will also share in funding arrangements to support initiatives that are explicitly tailored to their needs.

Strengthening annual performance reviews

Performance feedback is an essential element in any profession to drive professional engagement and continuous improvement. The mechanisms we currently have in place to evaluate the performance of our teachers, and give them important feedback and support, are underdeveloped and insufficient. This means we cannot get a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in our teaching workforce, which in turn limits our ability to support teachers and help them to continually improve.

At a system level, performance reviews can work to lift the standards of all teachers and school leaders. They are a critical means of identifying high performing teachers so they can be appropriately rewarded, act as mentors to beginning teachers and be deployed where they are needed most. Performance reviews are also essential in identifying our future educational leaders and supporting career pathways.

Action 1: We will introduce a structured annual performance review process to ensure every school teacher and leader is performing at their best.

From 2014	<p>A structured annual performance review process will be made available for teachers and school leaders from 2014.</p> <p>An annual performance review framework will identify the skills, knowledge and effort teachers and school leaders should reflect in their practice to be considered high performing.</p> <p>Each review will involve a formal performance appraisal process between the teacher or school leader and their supervisor, and for teachers it will include direct classroom observation. It will result in a report with a rating given for each individual's overall performance for that year.</p> <p>Teachers and school leaders will be able to nominate to participate in the scheme to which professional development and career opportunities will be linked.</p>
From 2016	<p>It is anticipated that full implementation of the annual performance review process will occur following the next round of enterprise bargaining negotiations.</p>

Supporting beginning teachers to reach their full potential

Teaching is a unique profession that sees graduates take full responsibility for student learning from day one, often without ready access to direct mentoring.

The Queensland Government recognises that beginning teachers and their students can benefit enormously from engaging with a senior colleague in a structured way and on a regular basis.

Action 2: We will introduce an accredited mentoring program for beginning teachers to learn from experienced, high performing teachers in the classroom.

From 2015	<p>All beginning teachers will be mentored by experienced, high performing teachers through the initial years of their teaching career.</p> <p>High performing teachers will receive accredited mentoring training to coach and guide the practice of beginning teachers.</p> <p>Mentors will be supported through release time from the classroom and ongoing networking and professional development to support beginning teachers.</p>
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Rewarding high performing teachers

Quality teachers deserve to be rewarded, not only in salary, but also through professional recognition and career progression. Providing a satisfying professional career path will encourage high performing teachers to stay in the classroom for longer, rather than progressing into other educational and administrative roles, or other professions.

To keep high performing teachers in the classroom for longer, and encourage teachers to focus on continuous improvement, the Queensland Government will introduce a range of rewards and incentives.

Action 3: We will strengthen requirements for experienced senior teacher positions.

From 2015	<p>The application process and criteria for moving from the senior teacher to experienced senior teacher classification will be strengthened.</p>
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Action 4: We will provide an accelerated pathway for high performing teachers to the experienced senior teacher classification.

From 2015	<p>Teachers may access accelerated progression to the experienced senior teacher classification if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have at least five years' teaching experience;• hold a Masters of Education degree or higher; and• demonstrate high performance in their annual performance reviews. <p>Maintenance of a teacher's accelerated classification will be subject to continued demonstration of high performance in their annual performance reviews.</p> <p>Without acceleration, a teacher with five years' experience would normally take eight years to reach the experienced senior teacher classification.</p>
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Action 5: We will create 300 new Master Teacher positions in targeted schools.

From 2015	<p>300 fixed-term Master Teacher positions will be created in schools where high-performing teachers are needed most.</p> <p>Experienced senior teachers with a Masters of Education degree who demonstrate high performance in their annual performance review will be eligible to apply for these positions. Specific criteria for each position will vary depending on the needs of the school in which they are situated.</p> <p>Master Teachers will supplement a school's normal staffing profile, and may be used for targeted student support, coaching, and planning and implementation of relevant initiatives. A key responsibility of Master Teachers will be to mentor beginning teachers.</p> <p>For the duration of their three-year contract, Master Teachers will receive a salary comparable to a Head of Curriculum. Maintenance of the Master Teacher position for the full three years of the contract, and subsequent extension of the contract, will be dependent on continued demonstration of high performance in the annual performance review process.</p>
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Action 6: We will provide Master Teachers in primary schools with an early years resource package to boost literacy and numeracy outcomes.

From 2015	<p>Master Teachers in primary schools will be supported in this task by an early years resource package of up to \$75 000 over three years, to be used to respond to the specific needs of the school.</p>
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Action 7: We will establish a bonus pool to reward the highest performing teachers and school leaders.

From 2015	<p>Principals will access funds from a regionally-managed bonus pool to reward teachers and leaders in their schools who demonstrate high performance in their annual performance review.</p>
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Rewarding strong school leaders

School leaders have a complex and demanding role in fostering a collaborative and productive school culture that will deliver a quality education for every child. The Queensland Government will reward school leaders by making performance bonuses available to state school principals who demonstrate a strong record of achievement. Over time, all principals and deputy principals will be more accountable for improved outcomes in their school through employment on a fixed-term contract basis.

Action 8: We will make performance bonuses available to state school principals.

From 2015	<p>Principals will be eligible to receive a performance bonus if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are employed on or transition to a performance-based fixed-term contract;• demonstrate high performance in their annual performance review; and• have completed or enrolled in a graduate certificate or higher degree in a relevant field.
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Action 9: We will introduce performance-based fixed-term contracts for principal and deputy principal positions.

From 2016	<p>All new principal and deputy principal positions will be offered on three-year contract terms, with contracts setting clear expectations regarding school outcomes, including student academic performance, engagement and school management.</p> <p>Enrolment in, or completion of, a graduate certificate or higher degree in a relevant field will be a prerequisite for obtaining a principal or deputy principal position. Contract extension will be dependent on completion of this qualification and demonstration of satisfactory performance in the annual performance review process.</p> <p>Implementation of this initiative will be progressed as part of the next round of enterprise bargaining negotiations.</p>
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Professionalising our school workforce

The Queensland Government is committed to raising the professional standards of the state's teaching workforce. We will support high performing teachers and school leaders to undertake the necessary study to enhance their performance and be eligible for more senior positions.

Action 10: We will offer scholarships for high performing teachers to undertake a relevant Masters degree.

From 2015	Up to 200 scholarships will be offered each year to high performing teachers (as demonstrated in their annual performance review) to undertake a Masters degree in a relevant education field negotiated with their employer.
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Action 11: We will offer scholarships to school leaders to undertake relevant postgraduate qualifications.

From 2015	Scholarships will be offered to principals and deputy principals to undertake a graduate certificate in a relevant field negotiated with their employer.
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Boosting school autonomy

Empowering and enabling school leaders and teachers to drive outcomes for students

The Queensland Government is committed to empowering school principals to play a key leadership role in their school community. We will expand and enhance the independence of schools and school leaders to direct resources to activities and programs that will best address the needs of their students and school communities. Over time, all schools will have the opportunity for greater discretion over their funding to foster innovation, target what makes a positive difference in their school community, reduce waste, and cut unnecessary red tape.

Independence for all schools

Queensland schools are different sizes, offer differing types of schooling, and require different levels of support and intervention. A one-size-fits-all approach to school governance, leadership and performance monitoring arrangements does not take this into account.

Many Queensland schools are already performing at a very high standard and require little support to continue at this level of performance.

The Queensland Government's Independent Public Schools initiative gives state schools the flexibility to account for and address differences in their students' needs, the character of their school communities, and the school's capacity to make the most of local opportunities.

We will learn from the continued roll out of the Independent Public Schools initiative, and ensure more Queensland schools have the opportunity to become independent over time.

Action 12: We will provide all schools with the opportunity to become independent over time.

2014	An additional 34 Independent Public Schools will start operating with a greater level of autonomy and be funded directly. These schools will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• determine their own staffing profiles, in consultation with the school community;• outsource teaching support and educational services and generate other forms of income where appropriate; and• respond to local communities through school differentiation and specialisation (e.g. specialist curriculum offerings; showcasing best practice and innovation; and diverse delivery models such as single-sex schooling and alternative school hours).
From 2016	120 state schools will be operating on an independent basis, and all remaining schools will have the opportunity to become independent from this time providing they meet required standards.

Developing schools and school leaders to assume increased autonomy

We recognise that many schools may not be ready to assume the level of autonomy afforded to our Independent Public Schools. We will provide these schools and their school leaders with the support they need to develop their capacity to take on a greater level of responsibility over time.

As school communities and school principals gain independence, they develop an understanding of what works. This knowledge will be shared to help other school leaders and their communities as they steer their schools toward independence.

Action 13: We will develop the capacity of schools to become independent over time.

<p>From 2014</p>	<p>A school autonomy expansion program will be developed to help schools meet the rigorous selection criteria to become an Independent Public School. The program will address factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial accountability; • balancing educational and business leadership in a school; • developing a healthy and productive school culture; • enhancing the capability of school councils; and • use of student performance data for continuous improvement. <p>All schools seeking to achieve independence will be able to apply to participate in the school autonomy expansion program.</p> <p>This program will draw on regional experience and a network of high performing principals to guide other school leaders in developing the necessary attributes to take on the responsibilities associated with successful school autonomy.</p> <p>This program will be supported by access to professional learning packages aimed at developing the skills, awareness and confidence of our school leaders to operate independently.</p>
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Action 14: We will remove union representatives from principal selection panels.

<p>From 2014</p>	<p>The relationship between the school principal and the school community is critical to drive improved outcomes in the new autonomous environment. It is important, therefore, that where a new principal is to be selected, the school community plays a central role in their selection and is satisfied with the outcome of that process.</p> <p>We will remove the requirement for a Queensland Teachers' Union representative to participate on recruitment and selection panels.</p> <p>Principal selection panels will consist of the Regional Director, another school principal and a member of the school community (in the case of an Independent Public School this will be a member of the school council).</p>
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Strengthening discipline in schools

Clear and consistent school discipline is an essential component of a high performing education system. Children and young people need self-discipline as part of their social development, and in order to achieve their academic and life goals. All students need safe, supportive and focused environments in which to learn.

Schools and school leaders need powers to effectively manage student discipline in a manner that supports the core business of teaching and learning.

Action 15: We will enhance discipline powers across the state schooling system and develop and implement an action plan to strengthen discipline in state schools.

From 2014	<p>An action plan for strengthened discipline will be implemented in state schools, and new behaviour contracts will be introduced with students and families.</p> <p>Principals will have greater discipline powers, and suspension and exclusion processes will be streamlined.</p> <p>Alternative school environments will be used for students with chronic behaviour concerns.</p>
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Working with our school education partners

The Queensland Government recognises that school education is a shared responsibility across the state, Catholic and independent schooling sectors. We will need the support of all three education sectors to achieve the initiatives set out in this direct action plan, as well as a shared investment from State and Federal Governments.

Just as the Queensland Government is the system manager of the state schooling system, Independent Schools Queensland and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission play a fundamental role in representing Queensland's independent and Catholic school sectors.

To facilitate the next wave of reforms in non-government schools across the state, the Queensland Government proposes to increase funding to the non-government school sectors by \$98 million over the first four years commencing in 2015.

As experts on their own schools, these sectors can tailor their reforms to their own individual needs and circumstances.

Non-state schools will have to demonstrate that they have systems in place to identify high performing teachers and provide feedback to all teachers on performance. It will also be crucial that non-state schools can demonstrate how they reward high performing teachers and what mechanisms are in place to deploy them to where they are needed most.

Conclusion

Great teachers = Great results represents an additional investment of \$535 million in Queensland's education system over the first four years commencing in 2015. Some initiatives outlined in this plan will commence in 2014 on condition that the Federal Government's funding for Queensland schools, including funding currently provided under relevant National Partnership Agreements, continues with appropriate indexation.

¹Jensen, Ben (2010) *Our Teachers, Investing in Our Economy*, Grattan Institute Report, Melbourne.

²Hattie, John (2003) 'Teachers Make a Difference: What is the research evidence?' Professional Learning and Leadership Development, NSW DET http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/limestonecoast/files/pages/new%20page/PLC/teachers_make_a_difference.pdf

³Rowe, Ken (2003) 'The Importance of Teacher Quality As A Key Determinant of Students' Experiences and Outcomes of Schooling', http://research.acer.edu.au/research_conference_2003/3

⁴Darling-Hammond, Linda (2010) *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future Teachers*, College Press, New York.

⁵Jensen, Ben (2010) *Our Teachers, Investing in Our Economy*, Grattan Institute Report, Melbourne.

⁶NSW Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2013) *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning What does the evidence tell us about effective teaching?* http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/news/greatteaching/gti_cese_research_report.pdf