

ATESOL NSW POSITION STATEMENT

USE OF ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE/DIALECT (EAL/D) FLEXIBLE FUNDING IN NSW GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Each year, the NSW Department of Education allocates up to \$60 million as EAL/D flexible funding to NSW Government schools as part of the equity loading for English Language Proficiency (ELP). This flexible funding is calculated based on each school's EAL/D needs as reported in the EAL/D annual survey. This allocation is made available because of additional Commonwealth needs-based equity funds allocated to the NSW Education Department from the 'Gonski' low English proficiency loading.

EAL/D flexible funding is intended to augment the school's EAL/D teacher allocation, or assist schools without an EAL/D allocation, through targeted EAL/D strategies and resources that support the specific English learning needs of EAL/D students, including students from refugee backgrounds and newly arrived students. Targeted strategies may include employment of additional EAL/D teachers, EAL/D focused curriculum, pedagogy and assessment initiatives, EAL/D professional learning for specialist EAL/D and mainstream staff, and bilingual support for students.

In making planning decisions about school programs, principals and executive staff have a professional duty to ensure resources earmarked for EAL/D learners directly benefit the equity cohort. This obligation is clearly stated in the Department's current [Multicultural Education Policy](#) (1.3.1), 'English language proficiency equity loading must be used to support the English language development of EAL/D students' and further specified in the Department's [Multicultural Education Procedures](#) (section 2), 'principals must ensure the flexible funding component of the English Language Proficiency equity loading is fully allocated to meet the needs of EAL/D students each year.'

The Department's [Anti-racism Procedures](#) also state that school leaders take action to prevent racism by providing 'resources and supports that are equitable and inclusive of the needs of students and staff from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds'

The 2020 Auditor General's Report, [Local Schools, Local Decisions: needs-based equity funding](#) found that there was no clarity or transparency in how schools had used their equity funding (including English Language Proficiency funding) for the benefit of identified groups. It also found that school annual reports did not adequately account for the equity funding received, or describe the impact of equity funding on student outcomes.

Feedback from EAL/D teachers and school leaders indicate that these systemic problems persist. They include: not disclosing the flexible funding allocation; excluding EAL/D teachers from planning effective use of the allocation, using the allocation for other purposes, and non-transparent reporting on the use of the allocation.

When ELP flexible funding is not used appropriately, EAL/D learners are denied the needs-based support they require to participate and achieve equitable outcomes in schooling. Such practices also undermine public education's capacity to effectively

respond to the English language and literacy learning needs of the growing K-12 EAL/D learner cohort resulting from Australia's ongoing immigration program.

Principals and executive can discharge their professional obligation in this area by ensuring:

- consultation with EAL/D teachers in planning and delivery of effective EAL/D programs
- collection and analysis of EAL/D-focused data to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of targeted EAL/D programs and resources
- transparency and accountability in the planning, use and reporting of the EAL/D flexible funding allocation.

ATESOL invites EAL/D teachers to anonymously share their experience of this issue at atesolnswinc@gmail.com Please indicated whether you are in a primary or secondary school.