



# **The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP**

## **Premier of NSW**

### **Minister for Western Sydney**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Sunday 11 March 2012

### **GETTING ON WITH THE JOB, HONOURING COMMITMENTS: LOCAL SCHOOLS, LOCAL DECISIONS**

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli today announced the most significant and far reaching reforms to school education in New South Wales in a century.

"We are getting on with the job of delivering on our election commitment to give decision making power back to schools and school communities," Mr O'Farrell said.

"Our Local Schools, Local Decisions policy is a roadmap for change. It sets out how we will, over time, give our schools more control over local decisions," he said.

"Government schools in NSW will be given the opportunity to respond to the needs of their students based on their specific circumstances, not on the basis of formulas and forms dictated by head office.

"I've always said decisions are best made by those closest to the people they affect – and we are delivering that here," Mr O'Farrell said.

Mr Piccoli said it is the people working in our schools with their communities who are best placed to make decisions. They understand the learning needs of each student and they are right where those needs are being met.

Mr Piccoli said that replicating the past would not deliver the best possible opportunities for the students of today and tomorrow.

"We know that it is the teacher in the classroom that inspires students to learn. Along with high expectations of their students and a relentless focus on learning, teachers can and do achieve the most extraordinary and wonderful things for our children – and for our society," Mr Piccoli said.

"We already trust our teachers and principals to put students at the centre of every decision they make. We know we can trust them to use the resources available to them to improve the learning of every student."

The key features of Local Schools, Local Decisions are:

- The shift in decision making responsibility from head office to school level

- The management of school budgets by school principals (including staffing and non-staffing resources)
- Schools will manage more than 70% of the total public school education budget
- A new resource allocation model will fund schools directly and funding will reflect complexity as well as student numbers
- Schools will determine the number of temporary and permanent staff within their budgets and principals will have an increased say in filling vacancies in their schools
- Salary progression will be based on attainment of professional standards
- Improved processes will be introduced to deal with underperformance
- Principal salary and classification will be linked to school complexity, not just student numbers
- Principals will be free to make more local decisions for purchases up to \$5000
- One school plan, one annual report and one budget all linked to student learning outcomes

“The relationships that teachers build with their students and the community are fundamental to their capacity to raise the educational standards in their schools. For this reason, schools need to have a say in the staffing mix that best meets the needs of their students.

“We must remove distractions and unnecessary bureaucratic processes so our teachers can get on with the job and more quickly respond to the needs of their students.

“We’re putting our principals and teachers back in the driving seat – allowing them to exercise their professional judgement and making them accountable for their decisions.

“We will now work with all key stakeholder groups to collaboratively develop the state-wide policy framework that will provide the details to make this reform happen.

“If we are to strengthen our society and enhance the lives of our citizens, we need to look at what is happening in our classrooms. We are doing just that.

“These reforms will help schools to deliver for students but we will not lose sight that quality teaching is at the heart of exceptional school education.

“We will continue to pursue improvements to teacher training, better professional development and a commitment to performance management so that we equip teachers to deliver for students.

“The principal is the educational leader in a school. We recognise and value the judgement of our school leaders. We will ensure they are trained, equipped and supported to make good decisions about everything that happens in a school and enable them to exercise their professional judgement,” Mr Piccoli said.