

More Teachers

A close-up portrait of a man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red and blue striped tie. He is looking slightly to the right with a serious expression. The background is dark and out of focus, with some bokeh lights.

RANN
Gets Results
2006

More teachers and smaller class sizes

Foreword

A message from the Premier

Teachers are at the core of South Australia's education system. We should never underestimate the impact a single teacher can have on a child's life.

The Labor Government promised more teachers to work in our schools, and we have delivered. We are the only South Australian government to have tackled class sizes in such a comprehensive way.

We understand that having smaller class sizes in the critical early years gives children the best possible start to their schooling. That's why, under this Government, junior primary classes of 26 students have been reduced to as low as 18 students in the State's most disadvantaged schools, and all junior primary class sizes have been reduced.

Smaller class sizes give teachers greater opportunity to provide individual attention and tuition to children. Smaller classes mean that children's special needs, learning difficulties, and talents can be identified and addressed early. Smaller classes also mean that problems don't go unnoticed until years later, when intervention strategies can be less effective.

Our inquiry into early childhood services highlighted that investment in the early years of schooling reduces the risk of failure at school and anti-social behaviour, which can be difficult and costly to turn around as children get older.

We are extending our commitment to reducing class sizes in the early years in state schools. The provision of an extra \$28 million, over four years, will employ an additional 100 teachers. This will reduce Year Three class sizes of 30 students by up to eight students a class.

The Labor Government values teachers and the important role they play in giving children the education and skills they need for the future.

That's why we have made investment in the early years of children's lives one of our main priorities in education and health.

Mike Rann
Premier

More teachers and smaller class sizes

Our Achievements

During the past four years, we have employed 286 more junior primary teachers – at a cost of more than \$20 million annually – to reduce Reception to Year Two class sizes in all State schools.

We have reduced the average size of Reception to Year Two classes in State schools from 26 students to as low as 18 students per class in the State's most disadvantaged schools.

We have implemented our \$35 million Early Years Literacy Plan. This plan provides for more specialist teachers, an extension of specialist programs such as Reading Recovery, and more literacy mentors. The plan also requires every primary school to develop a literacy implementation plan and special training for every preschool to Year Three teacher. It also provides the equivalent of 125 teachers across primary and preschools to focus intensively on literacy improvement.

The introduction of the Premier's Reading Challenge has also reignited a love of reading in many children across the State. In 2005, 80 per cent of all South Australian schools took part in the Challenge – with more than 70,000 children successfully completing the Challenge to read 12 books before September.

We also have provided more counsellors for primary schools.

The benefits of all these initiatives are beginning to show as children progress through the year levels.

Provisional benchmarks from last year's State Literacy and Numeracy Test results demonstrated improvement in all categories of reading, writing and numeracy at Year Three, compared with 2004 results.

As well, there are fewer children in the lowest literacy skill band, and the percentage of students in the top level of Year Three literacy and numeracy is the equal highest on record.

Furthermore, reductions in class sizes achieved by this Government mean that extra support has been provided to children with special needs and learning difficulties.

Our focus on investing in the early years through smaller class sizes, targeted literacy programs and the Premier's Reading Challenge is beginning to reap rewards. But there is more to be done.

Our Strategy

The Rann Government's commitment to more teachers and smaller class sizes is a feature of a broader strategy to ensure our schools and teachers are second to none.

We understand that teachers with security of employment are better able to focus on the quality of their teaching and on the young people in their classes. That's why, since 2002, more than 2000 teachers and school staff have gained permanent jobs.

The Rann Government is committed to building on the existing strengths in our country schools. We have provided \$2 million in scholarships to give country people financial help to gain a teaching degree, and to return to a job in a country school. Additionally, cash incentives of up to an extra \$6541 each year are provided for teachers who take up work in more than 300 rural and remote schools and preschools.

We want to keep our teachers working at their peak throughout their careers. That's why we have invested significantly in teacher training and development initiatives. We also have scholarships and awards to broaden the knowledge and skills of teachers.

We want to welcome and support our teachers, especially during their first years in the job. That's why we are funding a \$1 million, four-year initiative to support and retain new teachers .

Supporting our teachers and reducing class sizes mean our children get the best start to their schooling.

Our Plan for More Teachers

The Rann Government will employ an extra 100 teachers to reduce Year Three class sizes in all State schools in South Australia.

This will mean that classes will be reduced by up to eight students in the most disadvantaged schools, and by a minimum of four students in all schools.

These new teachers will be in schools at the beginning of the 2007 school year.

Cost:

2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	4-year total
\$4.0m	\$8.0m	\$8.0m	\$8.0m	\$28.0m