



# Investing in Better Quality Education

South  
Australian  
**Labor**

For the  
Future

# Foreword

We are driven by the ambition to give every child the best public education – and we’re proud of what we’ve achieved so far to reach that goal.

We’ve removed the distraction of mobile phones from high school classrooms, renewed a traditional Labor focus on literacy and numeracy, and employed 100 dedicated mental health and learning specialists across our schools.

We’ve backed our teachers and leaders with more permanency, empowered them to lead and delivered a fair pay rise.

And we’re rolling out a new South Australian curriculum with a stronger focus on the knowledge and skills students need when they leave school – such as civics and financial literacy.

In just four years, South Australian students have reported the best NAPLAN result in our state’s history, grown the rate of student attendance, increased SACE completion, and been empowered to choose vocational pathways that will lead to secure, well-paid jobs.

A second-term Malinauskas Labor Government will double down on our efforts to give every child the best education and set them up for success in life.

Teachers and support staff are our greatest asset in delivering good quality education, and the next stage of our plan to improve student results is driven by our belief in the power of educators to change the lives of South Australians.

Our reforms have the future in mind, ensuring every young person leaves school ready to maximise the opportunities available to them right here in South Australia.



Peter Malinauskas MP  
Premier for South Australia



# **Labor's Plan to Invest in Better Quality Education:**

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**Reducing screen time for students**

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**Establish a second phonics check in year two**

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**Create a pipeline of STEM Specialist Teachers**

**4**

**Deliver a new hands-on pathway for teachers to earn while they learn**

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**More professional learning for teachers**

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**Ensure a fairer, safer and healthier workplace**

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# DELIVERING BETTER QUALITY EDUCATION

The Malinauskas Labor Government is committed to delivering better quality education.

## Improved NAPLAN results

In 2025, for the first time since NAPLAN testing began, South Australia has improved or held its position in every domain compared with the rest of the country.



## More protection and support for our educators

Strengthened laws to ban abusive parents and caregivers from sites.

Reduced unnecessary work to allow more time to focus on their core business, such as simplifying the Inclusive Education Support Program applications for teachers and taking playground audits out of the hands of principals.



## Real wage increases for our Teachers

Record-breaking \$1.6 billion enterprise bargaining outcome for our teachers, with real wage increases and measures to address workload, classroom complexity and country educators.



## Permanent roles for teachers

More than 1,800 teachers in South Australia's government schools converted to permanent positions since March 2022, the highest conversion rate in the last decade.



## Increased participation in vocational education and training

Participation in VET courses increased by 21 percent from 2023 to 2024, with over 5,100 enrolments in quality VET courses.



## Autism Inclusion Teachers

Appointed in every South Australian government primary school.



## Leadership roles in schools filled

All leadership roles in South Australian government schools now fully recruited.



## Significant decrease in teacher vacancies

More than 50 percent decrease in teacher vacancies, since March 2022.



## More students completing SACE

70 percent of year 12 and 13 students completed SACE in 2024, compared to 62 percent in 2019.



## Fully and fairly funding every public school

Negotiated a new Gonski agreement that will see every public school in South Australia fully and fairly funded for the first time.



## Implemented measures to keep our kids off screens:

- ✓ Ban on mobile devices in schools
- ✓ Social media age restrictions
- ✓ Sports Voucher Plus expansion
- ✓ Strengthened online safety curriculum
- ✓ Investing in Wait Mate empowering parents to delay smartphones for their kids



But there's more to do – and that's what Labor will deliver.



# 01

## Reducing screen time for students

**The Malinauskas Labor Government is breaking down barriers of inequitable access to technology, providing eligible high school students with personal devices to support their study, and leading the nation in responsibly embracing artificial intelligence (AI).**

Our changes are focussed on ensuring South Australian students are prepared for the workplace and can use technology responsibly when they get there.

Yet in the early years of learning, minimising technology use is crucial for cognitive development and behaviour. As kids grow up, there needs to be well-designed, meaningful technology use, and we're determined to get the balance right.

### That's why Labor will:

- widely consult to **develop new guidelines for state government schools that regulate the use of technology in the classroom** – including arming parents with the best information for technology use at home
- **maximise safe and effective use of AI** to reduce the administrative burden on teachers, as well as develop a new tool for teachers seeking dedicated funding for students with a disability
- **add the responsible use of AI into the curriculum**, teaching students how to optimise AI in their studies, as well as the importance of critical thinking and the ability to identify misinformation and disinformation.



**In this term, the Malinauskas Labor Government has led the way on important reforms to encourage less screen time for our kids and ensure they are protected and well-equipped for the world they are growing up in.**

### Ban on Mobile Devices

Implemented a full mobile phone ban for students in South Australian Government schools. We've seen strong and positive outcomes from this pursuit and now every other state has implemented a similar ban.

### Social Media Ban

Our nation-leading legislation created a model for the Australian Government's world-leading ban on social media, enforcing a minimum age of 16 years across the country.

### Sports Vouchers Expansion

Delivered significant cost-of-living relief and increased access to extra-curricular activities through our expansion of the Sports Vouchers Plus Program. We have doubled the vouchers to \$200 per year, and expanded the eligible activities to include music lessons, dance and active recreation.

### Strengthened Curriculum

All students in our state government schools are now being taught about online safety and the dangers of social media through a strengthened curriculum implemented in 2025, providing the tools to navigate the online world confidently and safely.

### Wait Mate

Invested \$6.5 million to make the Wait Mate program available to every public and private school in the state. By creating a community of support, through schools and families, we are showing young people the benefits of delaying access to smartphones.

# 02

## Establish a second phonics check for year two students

South Australia led the country in literacy with the former Labor government introducing a phonics program in 2017 for the first time, seeing a remarkable improvement in the reading skills of South Australia's kids.

**Labor will double down, introducing a second phonics check for year two students from**

**2027, providing an opportunity to re-check kids who are struggling with phonics and reading.**

The new check will be enshrined in Department for Education policy and will include additional resourcing to build capability amongst teachers, as well as for children who need additional support.



# 03

## **Create a pipeline of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Specialist Teachers**

South Australia is creating an unprecedented number of specialised jobs through AUKUS, through our leadership in renewable energy, and through our investment in innovation.

We need to encourage our students to seize the opportunities at the culmination of a STEM pathway and having inspirational STEM teachers is essential to achieving this.

**That's why Labor will introduce a specialised STEM pathway to grow the number of STEM specialist teachers in government schools.**

We will create a tailored, certified specialist program for public school teachers.

Teachers who graduate with this certification will be supported to fast track their careers, progressing from being a certified “Practicing Specialist” to becoming an “Expert Specialist” – the highest level of specialist teacher in schools.

At the end of the course, successful teachers will be offered permanent employment in government schools, and the opportunity to take on STEM leadership roles.



# 04



## A new pathway for aspiring teachers to earn while they learn

Too often we hear that teachers feel they're not prepared enough for the classroom. They have studied a lot of theory but have not had enough hands-on experience to make them the best teacher they can be.

**That's why Labor will establish a nation-leading pathway for prospective students to earn while they learn, starting a career as a student support officer (SSO) and getting hands-on experience in the first two years of their university degree.**

This pathway will develop practical skills and exposure to the classroom setting, and

from the third year of their studies they will start as a teacher with a teaching mentor and strengthened program of professional learning support.

By the end of their degree, those that started as aspiring teachers will be highly skilled, fully practicing teachers with a platform to be part of South Australia's best trained crop of educators.

The new pathway is anticipated to support around forty per cent of teaching graduates over the next decade, and successful graduates will be prioritised for full-time employment in government schools.

## More professional learning for teachers

We want to make sure our teachers have access to ongoing, evidence-based professional learning, honing their skills and translating into better teaching and learning for students.

In an ever-changing world of new methods and technology, we must give teachers the tools to maintain modern teaching practices.

### That is why Labor will expand professional learning for teachers to upskill in areas of priority.

This will include offering more professional learning for regional teachers – because your postcode shouldn't determine your access to the best quality teacher training.

We will prioritise the following areas first:

- supporting teachers to adapt teaching approaches for students with disability
- when to use the most effective teaching approach, such as explicit instruction, compared with when other methods are better
- other professional learning will be developed in consultation with principals and teachers, adapting to the changing needs of our teachers

## Ensuring a fairer, safer and healthier workplace

Improving the education of our students is not possible without the dedication and hard work of our staff.

**We are a government proudly committed to supporting our staff, and that is why Labor will:**

- invest in a **new \$21 million Work Health and Safety Strategy** to create safer workplaces and ensure teachers can focus on teaching
- undertake a **review of school services officer (SSO), Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW) and Early Childhood Worker (ECW) classifications** ahead of Enterprise Bargaining to ensure staff are appropriately classified for the job they are doing
- **provide all SSOs with guaranteed access to professional learning**, including the Certificate III in Education Support at TAFE SA – giving them the opportunity to access training that sets them up to be the best SSOs

We will continue to work with teachers, principals, unions and associations to make meaningful change to reduce workload in schools and preschools – making sure the focus is on being able to give every child the best education.



# 07

## Public education for public good

### **Labor is unashamedly committed to public education – it's in our DNA.**

We want every child, no matter their background, to receive an outstanding education.

We want local public schools to be a strong proposition for all families, not a safety net.

Because we know that when our schools include students from diverse backgrounds, all kids do better.

#### **That's why Labor will:**

- introduce an ongoing communications campaign to encourage families to send their children to their local public school

- introduce grants for public schools to establish specialist programs that meet the aspirations and interests of their local communities
- establish a new Rapid Response Team to provide timely, centralised support for schools and communities when challenges arise – addressing issues quickly, with the community, to maintain confidence in their school



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