

10 November 2021

The Sunday Mail
Ms Jessica Leo-Kelton, Editor
Keith Murdoch House
31 Waymouth Street
Adelaide SA 5000

Dear Ms Leo-Kelton

I wish to respond to the article that was published in the Sunday Mail on 7 November 2021, "School funds riddle", written by Chris Russell, in which Tyndale Christian School featured prominently.

Firstly, it was disappointing that a photograph of a similarly named yet unaffiliated school located in New South Wales was used instead of a photograph of Tyndale Christian School, Salisbury East.

Secondly, given that the current funding of schools is based on need and parental capacity to pay, any attempt to comment on supposed disparities in school funding should be done by comparing schools located in similar geographical and socio-economic regions where students come from the same communities. I am not sure, therefore, why Mr Russell decided to compare Tyndale's funding with that of a school located in the eastern suburbs of Adelaide, or how such a comparison gives credence to a particular view about the funding of schools. Surely, it would have been more appropriate to consider the funding received by Tyndale (\$13,867 per student*), our next-door neighbour Salisbury East High School (\$14,791 per student*), and Salisbury High School (\$17,099 per student*) in order to provide a more credible comparison.

The article also fails to address the fact that the funding received by each school is impacted not only by the socio-economic background of families, but also by the size of the school, the relative remoteness of the school, the number of Indigenous students, the number of students from non-English speaking backgrounds, and the number of students with diagnosed disabilities or learning needs. Therefore, a simplistic comparison of dollar values from one school to another, or one sector to another, is basically meaningless.

What is most disappointing is that such articles, along with some of the unhelpful comments contained within them, including statements that the current funding model was an "affront to democracy" and had "abandoned public schools", perpetuate an artificial and unnecessary wedge between government and non-government schools. Further, they deflect attention from the outstanding work being done in all schools in South Australia to provide a world-class education to all of our students, irrespective of what school they attend.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely



Mike Potter

Head of Schools – Tyndale Christian Schools Group

Cc: The Hon John Gardner MP, Minister for Education
Mr Blair Boyer MP, Shadow Minister for Education
Mr Tony Zappia MP
Senator the Hon David Fawcett
Ms Paula Luethen MP
Mrs Carolyn Grantskalns, Chief Executive for AISSA
Mr Mark Ryan, Executive Officer for SA – Christian Schools Australia
Mr Ashley Bennett, Board Chair – Tyndale Christian Schools Group

**All figures are taken from the MySchool website.*