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Minister for Education

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THE HON VERITY FIRTH MP

NSW Minister for Education and Training

MEDIA RELEASE

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Extra pay for best teachers to work in neediest schools

For the first time, NSW will identify its best performing teachers and offer them increased pay to teach in schools serving the state's most disadvantaged communities.

The initiative is part of the Smarter Schools National Partnerships, a Rudd Government funding package worth \$720 million over five years for NSW schools.

"The Rudd Government is delivering an Education Revolution in all aspects of schooling, including through our efforts to provide greater information to parents about school performance," said Acting Prime Minister Julia Gillard.

"Transparency is not about naming and shaming schools. It is about making sure we know which schools need extra support and making sure they get that support.

"The National Partnerships package will deliver substantial new funding to schools in need, with a particular focus on ensuring quality teaching in every classroom."

NSW Education Minister Verity Firth said the State would use part of the new funding under the National Partnerships to create the position of 'Highly Accomplished Teacher'. Teachers who demonstrate exceptional skills will be able to apply for the new positions at a higher pay rate in schools serving low socio-economic status communities.

"This is about deploying the state's best and brightest teachers to schools where they are needed the most," Ms Firth said.

“The new positions will be additional to the school’s existing teaching team.

“They will take classes themselves, but also be on a reduced teaching load to enable them to mentor other teachers and take a role in the school’s leadership,” Ms Firth said.

“Apart from the obvious benefit for students, the new classification also offers an additional career progression for excellent NSW teachers, one that doesn’t take them out of the classroom into administrative roles.”

Ms Gillard said the initiative would make a significant difference for NSW schools.

“We know from international research that there is a strong correlation between socio-economic background and educational achievement,” Ms Gillard said.

“We also know that most important factor in reversing that disadvantage in the classroom is the quality of the teacher.”

The initiative is part of the NSW Implementation Plan for the \$720 million National Partnerships package, released today by Ministers Gillard and Firth at St Mary’s North Public School in Sydney’s West.

Catholic and Independent schools in NSW will also receive a share of National Partnerships funding and have signed on to enhance their own mechanisms of recognising and rewarding quality teaching in their schools.

Teachers wishing to apply for the new positions will either be already accredited at Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership through the NSW Institute of Teachers or be in the process of achieving such accreditation. Initially, 100 positions will be created, with the first tranche to be advertised from October 2009.

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