

LETTER TO THE EDITOR, THE AGE

Thursday 21st November 2012

Whilst State Education Minister Martin Dixon's plans to promote greater levels of community involvement and partnerships in our schools are to be welcomed, care must be taken to ensure that this does not further undermine the important role played by schools in Victoria's most disadvantaged communities ('State offers ways, not means, to lift schools', 19/11). There needs to be greater recognition that the relationship between school and community is not a one way street and that schools play a vital role in our communities. This role is amplified in disadvantaged areas where schools are often left to deal with the consequences of higher rates of child protection involvement, persistent unemployment, lower educational attainment, crime, mental illness and drug and alcohol abuse. Yes, schools in these areas should be encouraged to work closely with their local community to improve opportunities for children, but this should not be considered a substitute for government funding. Ultimately, if we want to raise education standards in our most disadvantaged communities, we need to implement the recommendations of the Gonski Report and provide schools in these communities with the resources they require.

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