This National Partnership aims to lift outcomes for students in disadvantaged communities.

The Partnership

Over 600 New South Wales Government, Catholic and independent schools will be invited to participate in the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership. Each school will participate in the program for four years with schools starting between 2009 and 2012.

How were low socio-economic status schools identified?

Schools invited to join the partnership in New South Wales were identified in two ways:

- A list created by the Australian Government to a national methodology (government and non-government schools).
- Government schools with proven levels of need as demonstrated by State based criteria.

The national methodology

All Government and non-Government schools in New South Wales identified by the Australian Government as serving low socio-economic status communities were invited to join the program.

The Australian Government used a nationally agreed methodology to create a list that ranked all schools in Australia by their level of disadvantage, using the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD), constructed from the 2006 Census.

IRSD summarises 17 different variables that all relate to disadvantage and can be summarised into the following broad categories:

- Housing variables
- Income variables
- Education variables
- Employment and occupation variables
-  Various other indicators of relative disadvantage including skills, language backgrounds other than English, single parent families, access to a car and the Internet.


State Based Criteria

The Department of Education and Training in New South Wales manages State based programs for schools serving low socio-economic status communities. The most disadvantaged schools are those on the Priority Action Schools program. Eligibility for this program is based on a survey of parents at each school.

In order to ensure that the most disadvantaged Government schools are included in the partnership, the list of Government schools includes:

- Those identified through the national methodology (IRSD).
- Any new or continuing Priority Action School not already included.
- The 30 next most disadvantaged schools identified by the Priority Action Schools process, but which were not included in the Priority Action Schools program.
- Any school not covered by the above criteria that had a greater than 25 percent enrolment of Aboriginal students (averaged over a three year period).

Further information

For more information visit the NSW Schools National Partnerships website www.nationalpartnerships.nsw.edu.au

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