



Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

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MCEETYA Meeting

Communiqué, MCEETYA, 17/04/09; Media Release, The Hon Peter Garrett MP, 17/04/09; The Australian, Justine Ferrari, 17/04/09; The Australian, Corrie Perkin, 17/04/09; The Advertiser, Maria Moscaritolo, 18/04/09; The Age, Dan Harrison, 18/04/09; The Australian, Justine Ferrari & Corrie Perkin, 18/04/09; Courier Mail, Tanya Chilcott, 18/04/09; Sydney Morning Herald, Anna Patty, 18/04/09

Last week's Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) meeting in Adelaide has agreed to include the arts and music in the national curriculum. The meeting of all state, territory and Australian Government Education Ministers agreed that music, visual arts and the performing arts would all be included in the second stage of national curriculum development, alongside geography and languages. MCEETYA also agreed to establish a framework for the publication of school performance information that would enable the public to access nationally consistent information on schools' results, workforce, financial resources and student population. Under the agreement, which is based on the existing *Schools Online* site in Western Australia, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) will be responsible for publishing 2008 and 2009 NAPLAN data for all schools, as well as 'associated contextual information'. A website will be created that will permit the public to compare the student characteristics, test results and sources of income of schools. Every school in Australia will have a page on the website with links to its own website and other information. The page will outline information regarding the school environment, the school type, teacher and student numbers, levels of teacher professional accreditation, Year 12 completion and tertiary entrance results, vocational education and training participation, literacy and numeracy standards, parent, student and teacher satisfaction surveys and sources of school income. Parents will be able to compare the performance of 'like schools' as well as groups of 'like students' within different schools.

The Australian Government Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, emphasised once again that the Australian Government remained committed to transparent reporting of school results and characteristics, but insisted that it would not compile 'simplistic league tables'. Instead, Minister Gillard argued that schools should be required to provide 'sophisticated data' that enable comparisons between 'groups of like schools' and which ensured that schools remained accountable. Minister Gillard also called for the publication of student results on a sector basis, to enable comparisons between the performance of Catholic, government and independent schools. The Western Australian Minister for Education, The Hon Dr Liz Constable MP, argued that the *Schools Online* website had not led to a flight of parents to the best-performing schools in Western Australia. She claimed that the website engendered 'healthy discussion' from parents who 'responsibly interpreted school results'. Dr Constable also indicated that 'it's important to emphasise that you shouldn't read too much into one set of information from one point in time. There's a whole range of factors that people consider in choosing a school, and in WA it hasn't led to large number of parents changing schools.' The MCEETYA Communiqué argued that the publication of school performance information would 'support accountability, school evaluation, collaborative policy development and resource allocation' and announced that the requirements would apply to both government and non-government schools. The Communiqué also stated that 'through better monitoring of performance at the student, school and system level, educational outcomes can be lifted across all schools'.

In response to the announcement, the Australian Education Union called for the introduction of legislation to prevent the 'misuse' of school performance data. The President of the Australian Secondary Principals' Association, Mr Andrew Blair, criticised the announcement because it 'does not close the door on unscrupulous media creating its own comparative sets of league tables about school results'. The Chief Executive of AISV, Ms Michelle Green, indicated that Victorian independent schools would cooperate with the process, but called for MCEETYA to ensure that published data was truly comparable.

Note: The AISV Weekly Briefing is also available on the AISV web site, including back issues. The AISV web site is at <http://www.ais.vic.edu.au>.

To obtain further information on any of the above matters, please contact AISV

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