



Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

A9210 ABN 44 711 074 857

20 Garden Street, South Yarra VIC 3141

Phone: 03 9825 7200 Fax: 03 9826 6066

Email: aisv@ais.vic.edu.au

No: 14/2009

Week Ending: 8 May 2009

[Australian Government Announces Capital Funding for Schools](#)

Minister Julia Gillard has announced the first round of funding to schools under the *Primary Schools for the 21st Century* program.

[Principal Associations Argue Against League Table Publication](#)

Following the publication by a Hobart newspaper of a comparison of Tasmanian schools, school principal organisations have repeated calls for government to prevent the publication of 'league tables' of school performance information.

[National Curriculum Board Releases Detailed Curriculum Documentation](#)

The National Curriculum Board has released the foundation documents outlining the proposed national curriculum in English, mathematics, science and history.

[Queensland Teachers to Undertake Literacy and Numeracy Assessment](#)

A report to the Queensland Government has recommended that teachers be required to pass literacy and numeracy assessment before receiving registration to teach in Queensland.

[Business Alliance Calls for Focus on Asian Studies](#)

An alliance of business groups and corporations has called for Australian schools to place a greater emphasis on Asian languages and culture in the curriculum.

[Parliamentary News](#)

Forthcoming sitting dates for the Victorian and Australian Parliaments.

[Seminars for the week beginning 11 May 2009](#)

Disclaimer: The information contained in this document is to the best of our knowledge and belief correct at the date of publication. However, no warranty or guarantee is or can be provided by AISV or any member of its staff, and no liability is or can be accepted for any loss or damage resulting from any person relying on or using this information contained in this publication.

Copyright: AISV Member Schools are welcome to use the information in this publication. Acknowledgement of AISV would be appreciated.

Australian Government Announces Capital Funding for Schools

Media Release, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, 04/05/09; Media Release, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, 08/05/09; Media Release, AISV, 08/05/09; The Age, Miki Perkins & Paul Austin, 04/05/09; The Age, Royce Millar, Jason Dowling & Kate Lahey, 04/05/09; Courier Mail, Tanya Chilcott, 06/05/09; Daily Telegraph, Vikki Campion & Bruce McDougall, 06/05/09; Sydney Morning Herald, Anna Patty, 06/05/09; Daily Telegraph, Maralyn Parker, 07/05/09; The West Australian, Bethany Hiatt, 07/05/09; The Advertiser, Maria Moscaritolo, 08/05/09

The Australian Government Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, announced 1499 Australian schools would receive \$2.8 billion and that 361 Victorian schools would receive a total of \$686 million under the first round of the *Primary Schools for the 21st Century* (P21) element of the *Building the Education Revolution* (BER) program. Sixty-seven per cent of the funding for Victorian schools in the first round was allocated to government schools (\$457 million), with 23 per cent (\$157 million) allocated to Catholic schools and 10 per cent (\$72 million) for independent schools. Across Australia, 70 per cent of funding was allocated to government schools, compared to 17 per cent for Catholic schools and 13 per cent for independent schools. The first round of P21 funding provided support to 20 per cent of eligible schools. Newspapers quoted critics of Minister Gillard's announcement who claimed that funding should be targeted 'on a needs basis' and towards 'dilapidated public schools'. Maralyn Parker in the *Daily Telegraph* claimed that 'to give so much money to wealthy schools makes Australia an international idiot'. In response, Minister Gillard stated that 'the Rudd Government wants to make sure every school is a great school and that we support jobs in every local community during these difficult economic times'. The Chief Executive of AISV, Ms Michelle Green, indicated that it was important that teachers and students in all schools had access to modern teaching and learning facilities. She stated that 'today's funding announcement is in line with government guidelines and recognises that independent schools receive only a fraction of the capital funding that governments invest in government schools. The funding roughly matches percentages of enrolments in each sector – government, Catholic and independent. It will be welcomed by parents with children at independent schools who make substantial personal financial contributions to the capital development and running costs of their schools, saving taxpayer dollars.' All Australian primary and special schools are eligible to receive funding under the P21 program.

The Age also claimed that the Victorian Government was considering how to fast-track projects funded under the BER program through state planning requirements. The newspaper reported sources who claimed that building projects would bypass the usual planning assessment processes to ensure that funding passed quickly 'out the door'. However, the newspaper claimed that planning, architectural and local government authorities were concerned that a 'focus on "shovel-ready" projects will skew billions of dollars towards...pools and gyms for rich private schools, at the expense of...the more urgent needs of government schools'. Go to www.buildingtheeducationrevolution.gov.au for a list of the schools funded under the first round of the P21 program.

Principal Associations Argue Against League Table Publication

Media Release, Australian Primary Principals' Association, 07/05/09; Hobart Mercury, David Killick, 06/05/09; The Age, Miki Perkins, 08/05/09; The Australian, Editorial, 08/05/09; Canberra Times, Emma Macdonald, 08/05/09; Courier Mail, Tanya Chilcott, 08/05/09; Sydney Morning Herald, Anna Patty, 08/05/09

The Australian Primary Principals' Association (APPA) has joined calls for the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) to introduce safeguards to prevent the publication of league tables of school results. APPA also called for governments to introduce a cap on the amount of time that schools devote to preparation for national benchmark tests. APPA stated that it supported 'the responsible release' of school performance information, but would not support 'the public reporting of school results in a "like school" format – the so-called like schools may be similar in some ways but unlike in many others'. The president of APPA, Ms Leonie Trimper stated that 'people must understand that the professional reputations of school principals and their staffs [sic] are at stake' and recommended that governments act to prevent 'anti-educational, unethical "gaming" practices designed to inflate test results'. APPA's criticisms followed the publication in the *Hobart Mercury* of a list of Tasmanian secondary schools, ranked according to the average percentage of students reaching minimum literacy and numeracy standards, parent satisfaction and student attendance rates. Tasmania has become the first state in Australia to release school performance information on a centralised website. The President of the Australian Secondary Principals' Association, Mr Andrew Blair, argued that 'in the Mercury we see the direct result of [MCEETYA's] inaction in not legislating against the misuse of data...By doing nothing they have put at risk the introduction of a rounded, balanced and creative curriculum for kids in Tasmania.' However, the editor of *The Australian* argued that 'keeping school results secret only defends mediocrity' and stated that 'more important [than a balanced timetable] is the democratic right to know how schools are performing'. Go to www.appa.asn.au to access APPA's position paper on the release of school performance information.

National Curriculum Board Releases Detailed Curriculum Documentation

The Age, Miki Perkins, 08/05/09; The Australian, Justine Ferrari, 08/05/09

The National Curriculum Board (NCB) has released the key foundation documents that will shape the proposed national curriculum. *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* outlines a set of guiding principles, structural elements and broad content directions for a national curriculum, consistent with the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians. Four additional documents outline the curriculum structure and topics to be covered for English, Mathematics, Science and History for each year level from Prep to Year 12. Finally, the NCB has released consultation reports on the original framing papers for the four learning areas. The curriculum documents indicate that the use of A to E grades will be retained, and teachers will be provided with examples of student work to indicate the difference between expected grades. The NCB has recommended that traditional grammar be an integrated part of the English course and has commissioned a report on the nature of grammar to be included in a scope and sequence document. The NCB will shortly be replaced by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and

Reporting Authority (ACARA), which will consider the NCB's curriculum proposals. Go to www.ncb.org.au to access copies of the curriculum documents.

Queensland Teachers to Undertake Literacy and Numeracy Assessment

The Australian, Justine Ferrari, 02/05/09; Courier Mail, Rodney Chester & Tanya Chilcott, 02/05/09

A report prepared for the Queensland Government has recommended that teaching graduates be required to undertake an examination in science, literacy and numeracy before receiving registration to teach in primary schools. The report from Professor Geoff Masters, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Council for Educational Research, made several recommendations in relation to Queensland's perceived falling education standards. It argued that the examinations would ensure that teachers had a sound knowledge of the three subject areas and how to teach them. Teachers who were already registered would not be required to undertake the examination. Professor Masters also argued that it would ideally become part of a national system of standards and accreditation. The report also recommended that Queensland schools should introduce additional standardised testing for students, including a science examination that students would take every two years, that the Queensland Government clarify the standards expected of teachers, that the Queensland Government provide additional funding for specialist literacy, numeracy and science teachers, and that new professional development courses be introduced to improve teachers' literacy, numeracy and science skills. The report, however, did not recommend that Queensland introduce external exams for senior secondary students. In response, the Premier of Queensland, The Hon Anna Bligh MP, stated that 'literacy and numeracy are the foundation of all learning, and we need to improve the performance of our children in this area to give them the best possible chance. This report is a road map to how to get us to better performance.'

Business Alliance Calls for Focus on Asian Studies

The Age, Miki Perkins, 05/05/09; The Age, Miki Perkins, 06/05/09; The Australian, Rowan Callick, 06/05/09

Various unions, business groups and large companies have formed an alliance to encourage a greater focus on Asian culture and languages in Australian schools. The *Business Alliance for Asia Literacy* was launched by the Australian Industry Group (AIG) and consists of 60 associations and corporations. The Alliance expressed concern that only three per cent of Australian students studies an Asian language at university, while only 12 per cent of Year 12 students studies a foreign language. It called for schools and governments to ensure that a knowledge of Asia and its languages was a core element of the national curriculum. According to AIG's Chief Executive, Heather Ridout, 'once we come out of this economic downturn Australia will look to Asia as a core driver of our own recovery. Understanding Asia, knowing the languages, cultures and traditions and teaching our children about our near neighbours is essential for future prosperity.' The Alliance also indicated that it would canvass member organisations to find speakers who would be able to talk in schools about the need for Asia skills in the workplace.

Parliamentary News

The Victorian Parliament (Assembly and Council) resumed sitting this week for the delivery of the 2009 Victorian Budget. The Legislative Assembly resumed on Tuesday 5 May 2009 and the Legislative Council resumed on Wednesday 6 May 2009. Both Houses rose on Thursday 7 May 2009 and will next sit from Tuesday 2 June 2009 until Thursday 11 June 2009. The Australian Parliament (House of Representatives and Senate) will return from the Autumn Recess on Tuesday 12 May 2009 for the delivery of the 2009 Australian Budget. Both Houses will rise on Thursday 14 May 2009.

Seminars for the week beginning 11 May 2009

Day	Seminar Name	Time	Venue
Monday 11/5	Assessment for LOTE Teachers – Middle Years Reading & Writing in the Middle Years – Day 3 of 8	9.30 am – 3.30 pm 9.30 am – 3.00 pm	Seminar Room Training Centre
Tuesday 12/05	Reading & Writing in the Middle Years – Day 4 of 8	9.30 am – 3.00 pm	Training Centre
Wednesday 13/05	Authentic LOTE Texts: From the Start	9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Seminar Room
	Exploring A Range of Teaching & Learning Experiences for the Mathematically Able Student	9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre
	Governance Seminar Series – Session 1: Introduction to School Governance	6.00 pm – 8.00 pm	Training Centre
Thursday 14/05	Using ICT to Support Curriculum Development & Delivery for Students with Learning Difficulties	9.00 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre
	Alcohol & Young People	9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Seminar Room
	Studies of Asia	4.30 pm – 6.00 pm	Training Centre
Friday 15/05	Using ICT to Support Curriculum Development & Delivery for Students with Learning Difficulties	9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre
	Contemporary Secondary Mathematics Assessment Practices	9.30 am – 3.00 pm	Seminar Room

The Seminar Room is located at 20 Garden Street. The Training Centre and Board Room are located at 30 Garden Street.

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

Ph: (03) 9825 7200 Fax: (03) 9826 6066

Email: aisv@ais.vic.edu.au