



Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

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[Research Paper Calls for the Introduction of Funding Vouchers for School Education](#)

The Institute of Public Affairs has launched a paper that calls for government education funding to be provided to individual students, regardless of the school that they attend.

[Research Paper Calls for a Single Funding System for Schools](#)

Professor Jack Keating has argued that schools should receive additional funding when they enrol students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

[Computer Access at Home Said to Impair Student Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes](#)

Research in the United States has claimed that, all other things being equal, student access to computers at home was linked to poorer performance in reading and mathematics.

[Victoria Provides Legal Recognition for Informal Carers](#)

The Victorian Government has introduced a statutory declaration which will permit informal carers to sign documentation on behalf of children in their care.

[Parliamentary News](#)

Forthcoming sitting dates for the Victorian and Australian Parliaments.

[Media Learning Week](#)

The State Library of Victoria is offering a series of professional development opportunities for teachers in association with Media Learning Week.

[Seminars for the week beginning 27 July 2009](#)

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Research Paper Calls for the Introduction of Funding Vouchers for School Education

Media Release, Australian Education Union, 20/07/09; The Australian, Christian Kerr, 20/07/09; The Australian, Editorial, 21/07/09; The Australian, Julie Novak, 21/07/09

The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) has released a paper calling for the introduction of a school voucher funding system. IPA Research Fellow Julie Novak's *A Real Education Revolution: Options for Voucher Funding Reform* paper has accused the Australian Government's Education Revolution of perpetuating 'the waste, inefficiency and perverse incentives that come with funding micromanagement' and has argued for government funding to be provided to individual students rather than the school that they attended. Ms Novak stated that her proposal would encourage greater choice in education and improve academic outcomes, and that it would be popular with parents. The paper indicated that 'vouchers represent a powerful tool to tackle educational disadvantage...because parents of children with special education needs, or from low-income families, are financially empowered to take their children out of failing schools and into high-quality educational institutions.' The paper investigated a range of options, including a universal voucher system and various vouchers that targeted particular groups of disadvantaged students 'so students in those groups have the potential to attend high-quality, high-achievement schools'. Ms Novak also indicated that the use of targeted vouchers would act as an effective trial for a broader voucher scheme and would represent 'the most realistic policy potential in Australia'. She stated that her proposal would be 'good for parents, great for students', but acknowledged that the proposal would lead to 'some reluctance among some of the entrenched interests'. According to *The Australian*, the leader of the Opposition, The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, MP, has also ordered the Shadow Minister for Education, The Hon. Christopher Pyne, MP, to also investigate whether a voucher funding system should be part of the party's policy platform. In response, the Australian Education Union argued that the introduction of funding vouchers would represent 'the absolute commodification of education' and called for the Coalition to 'to rule out the introduction of a policy that would cut public school funding'. Go to www.ipa.org.au/publications/1689/a-real-education-revolution-options-for-voucher-funding-reform to access a copy of the report.

Research Paper Calls for a Single Funding System for Schools

The Australian, Justine Ferrari, 22/07/09; The Australian, Glyn Davis, 22/07/09

The Education Foundation has released a paper that has argued that the current school funding system rewards schools for enrolling students who are 'economically or academically endowed' and has called for a single education system, to ensure that all students are able to access a consistent quality of education, regardless of where they live and their socioeconomic background. Professor Jack Keating's *A New Federalism in Australian Education: A Proposal for a National Reform Agenda* report has argued that funding should be provided to schools with lower Year 12 completion rates and which offered fee relief for low-income families. The paper stated that 'schools that are more willing to work with other schools in the community to improve overall standards should be funded to support that collaboration.' Professor Keating also argued that a single level of government should control education funding, rather than state governments providing the majority of funding for government schools and the Australian Government providing the majority of funding for non-government schools. The paper also called for governments to adopt purchasing agreements with schools to provide whole programs to which schools would sign up, rather than providing money to individual schools. Finally, Professor Keating argued that an independent national school quality agency should be established to audit school performance and student participation and to provide advice to schools on programs that might benefit their students. Professor Keating argued that the majority of non-government schools, 'being Catholic and increasingly low-fee Anglican schools', would share the philosophy of providing 'a quality education regardless of family background, as a way of overcoming social disadvantage'. Go to www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/fya_newfederalism_fullreport2.pdf to access a copy of the report.

Computer Access at Home Said to Impair Student Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes

The Age, Peter Martin, 20/07/09; Canberra Times, Emma Macdonald, 21/07/09

A researcher from Duke University in the United States has claimed that student access to a computer impairs their performance in reading and mathematics. Professor Jacob Vigdor has argued that, while children in homes with computers tended to perform better on literacy and numeracy benchmark tests, it was actually a range of other socioeconomic factors that influenced these children's academic performance. Professor Vigdor assessed the performance of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds before and after their families acquired a computer, finding that 'the introduction of home computer technology is associated with modest but statistically significant and persistent negative impacts on student math and reading test scores'. The research indicated that 'one of the biggest problems with home computer use appeared to be that internet access and its associated web surfing and game playing crowded out productive computer use, and, often, homework'. Professor Vigdor also claimed that he obtained similar results for the penetration of broadband access and the amount of time that students reported using the computer for homework. He claimed that 'the bad effects fade somewhat over time, but even after five years they

are still negative'. However, Professor Vigdor's research also noted that access to computers improved other skills for students which were not measured directly by standardised literacy and numeracy tests.

Victoria Provides Legal Recognition for Informal Carers

Media Release, The Hon. Lisa Neville, MLA, 19/07/09

The Victorian Minister for Community Services, The Hon. Lisa Neville, MLA, has announced that informal carers will be granted greater legal status to make decisions on behalf of children in their care. Informal carers will now be permitted to sign a *Statutory Declaration for Informal Carers*, which will include identification details of the carer and the child. Upon presentation of the statutory declaration to Victorian Government, Australian Government and community organisations, informal carers will now be permitted to access information and services and to undertake tasks such as enrolling the children in their care in kindergarten or school, signing school permission slips and granting permission for medical procedures. For further information on the Statutory Declaration for Informal Carers, contact the Office of the Child Safety Commission at www.ocsc.vic.gov.au or on 1300 782 978.

Parliamentary News

The Victorian Parliament (Assembly and Council) rose on Thursday 25 June 2009. Both Houses will resume sitting on Tuesday 28 July 2009. The Australian Parliament (House of Representatives and Senate) rose on Thursday 25 June 2009 for the Winter Recess. Both Houses will resume in the Spring Session on Tuesday 11 August 2009.

Media Learning Week

As part of Media Learning Week 2009, the State Library of Victoria and Student Youth Network are offering a series of free professional development opportunities for teachers. The series of lectures, workshops, and panel discussions include sessions on digital media in the classroom, media careers, video games for educational purposes, radio programming, videoblogging and web safety. Media Learning Week runs between Monday 24 August 2009 and Friday 28 August 2009. Go to <http://syn.org.au/education> for further information or to register to attend any of Media Learning Week sessions.

Seminars for the week beginning 20 July 2009

Day	Seminar Name	Time	Venue
Monday 27/07	Country Areas Principals' Forum	9.30 am – 6.00 pm	Como Hotel
	The Primary School LOTE Class – What makes for a Fantastic Program?	9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Seminar Room
	New LOTE Teachers Support/Professional Learning Group	4.30 pm – 6.00 pm	Seminar Room
Tuesday 28/07	Teaching Spelling in Perspective	9.30 am – 3.00 pm	Seminar Room
	LOTE Activities Sharing Day (Day 1 of 2)	9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre
Wednesday 29/07	Integrating the Use of Multiple Resources and Moving Away from Sole Dependence on the Single Mathematics Text (Day 2 of 2)	9.30am – 3.00 pm	Training Centre
	TAA40104 – Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (Day 1 of 4)	9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Seminar Room
	Ongoing Professional Learning for Trained Reading Recovery Teachers (Day 4 of 6)	1.30 pm – 4.00 pm	St Leonard's Training Centre
	Directors Professional Learning – Beyond the Daily	4.00 pm – 6.00 pm	St Leonard's Training Centre
Thursday 30/07	Enhancing Learning in the Middle Years Through ICT – Program One (Day 3 of 4)	8.30 am – 4.00 pm	Seminar Room
Friday 31/07	Enhancing Learning in the Middle Years Through ICT – Program One (Day 4 of 4)	8.30 am – 4.00 pm	Seminar Room
	How to Differentiate the Curriculum to Cater for All of the Students in Your Class (Day 1 of 4)	8.30 am – 4.00 pm	Training Centre

The Seminar Room is located at 20 Garden Street South Yarra. The Training Centre and Board Room are located at 30 Garden Street South Yarra. The Como Hotel is located at 630 Chapel Street South Yarra. St Leonard's College is located at 163 South Road, Brighton East.

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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