



Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

A9210 ABN 44 711 074 857

20 Garden Street, South Yarra VIC 3141

PO Box 2138, Prahran VIC 3181

Phone: 03 9825 7200 Fax: 03 9826 6066

Email: aisv@ais.vic.edu.au

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[Queensland Government Releases School Benchmark Performance Information](#)

The Queensland Government has released details of the performance of every Queensland school on 2008 literacy and numeracy benchmark tests.

[Education Expert Calls for Greater Transparency for Australian Schools](#)

Dr Ken Boston has called for Australian schools to accept greater transparency in order to ensure that parents do not rely on 'opaque' league tables.

[Western Australia to Provide Government Schools with Greater Autonomy](#)

The Western Australian Government will give 30 government schools greater control over their budgets.

[Australian Government to Conduct Review of Education Export Industry](#)

In the light of recent controversy, Minister Julia Gillard has announced that a review will be conducted of the laws and regulations that govern Australia's education export industry.

[Parliamentary News](#)

Forthcoming sitting dates for the Victorian and Australian Parliaments.

[Seminars for the week beginning 17 August 2009](#)

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Queensland Government Releases School Benchmark Performance Information

Courier Mail, Tanya Chilcott & Jane Chudleigh, 08/08/09; Courier Mail, Tanya Chilcott, Jane Chudleigh, Wayne Clarke & Anika Hume, 08/08/09; Daily Telegraph, Editorial, 08/08/09; Hobart Mercury, David Killick, 08/08/09; The Australian, Jamie Walker, Milanda Rout, Debbie Guest, Verity Edwards & Jared Owens, 10/08/09

The Queensland Government has released information to the public showing the average performance of every Queensland school in 2008 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The 'single, statewide compilation' of 2008 data demonstrated that non-government schools and schools in higher socioeconomic areas had performed better on average than government schools, schools in lower socioeconomic areas and schools with large numbers of indigenous students. The Queensland Minister for Education, The Hon. Geoff Wilson, MP, argued that he was releasing the information 'to get ahead of the game', but warned against using NAPLAN data to judge schools, stating that the information provided was 'a snapshot and a snapshot only. It is one part of the total picture of information that parents should take into account'. The Queensland Association of State School Principals criticised the release of the data, arguing that it 'could malign some excellent schools that were doing extremely well given their resources'. Meanwhile, the Premier and Minister for Education in Tasmania, The Hon. David Bartlett, MP, ruled out the introduction of legislation in Tasmania to prohibit the publication of school performance information. He indicated that, while he remained opposed to the creation of 'simplistic league tables', freedom of information represented a 'fundamental tendency in Australian life'. The Tasmanian branch of the Australian Education Union indicated that it would follow the lead of the New South Wales Teachers' Federation and refuse to cooperate with 2010 NAPLAN testing if the Tasmanian Government did not pass such legislation. A spokesperson for the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development stated that 'there is no plan to publish a single list of every school's NAPLAN data. However, Victoria is planning to include each school's NAPLAN data as part of a more comprehensive set of information that will be provided on each school's performance – providing parents with a richer picture of a school's performance and what it has to offer their children.'

Education Expert Calls for Greater Transparency for Australian Schools

The Australian, Justine Ferrari, 11/08/09; The Age, Farrah Tomazin, 11/08/09

The former head of the British curriculum authority and former director-general of education in New South Wales and South Australia, Dr Ken Boston, has argued that Australian schools need to accept greater transparency, to ensure that parents do not rely on league tables of school performance information. Speaking at an Australian Primary Principals' Association forum, Dr Boston argued that traditionally, league tables were 'opaque' and contained little contextual information to explain school results. He claimed that 'we need rich reports which explain why a school may be performing less well, not just simplistic league tables...This would offer greater public accountability than league tables.' Instead, Dr Boston argued that schools needed to accept national testing and greater scrutiny so that the release of more comprehensive information could be used to improve schools. He stated that 'if the price of avoiding league tables...is greater external scrutiny...in the interests of the young people in your care and in the interests of the future of Australian education, I think that price is well worth paying'. Dr Boston has advocated an expansion of existing school annual reports to include information about national test results, teachers, students, curriculum offerings and information on the school's aims and values. He also called for the creation of a national report template to ensure consistency across schools and states, as well as the establishment of an independent school inspection body to verify the accuracy of any information in school annual reports. Finally, Dr Boston argued that governments needed to establish support programs and to provide additional resources for underperforming schools. He indicated that if additional support did not improve student performance, 'then quite drastic action should be taken, even if it involves replacing the head, replacing teachers or closing the school'.

Western Australia to Provide Government Schools with Greater Autonomy

The Australian, Nicolas Perpitch, 13/08/09; The West Australian, Bethany Hiatt & Amanda Banks, 13/08/09

The Western Australian Government has announced that it will pilot a program giving some government school principals greater control over their school's budgets. The Western Australian Minister for Education, The Hon. Liz Constable, MP, indicated that the *Independent Public Schools* system, which would be similar to the Victorian Government's system of self-managing government schools, would give selected school principals a single-line budget, with the ability to make their own decisions on issues such as hiring teachers and selecting curriculum offerings. Principals would also be given greater power to expel students. However, 'independent public schools' would still be required to pay teachers the same as other government schools and would also be required to enter into five-year delivery and performance agreements with specific improvement targets. Minister Constable indicated that the program would enable schools 'to make decisions that best suits the needs of their students and local communities' and claimed that it would reduce red tape. However, the Western Australian Opposition, the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia and the Australian Education Union expressed concern that the project would create a 'two-tiered public education system' with 'elite government schools' hiring the best teachers and expelling the lowest-performing students. The project will commence with 30 government schools in 2010. The Premier of Western Australia, The Hon. Colin Barnett, MP, indicated that the government would make an open-ended commitment to allow other schools to apply for greater autonomy.

Australian Government to Conduct Review of Education Export Industry

Sydney Morning Herald, Heath Gilmore & Nick O'Malley, 08/08/09; The Age, Heath Gilmore & Nick O'Malley, 14/08/09

The Australian Government Minister for Education, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, has announced a review into Australia's education export industry. The announcement follows concerns about the future of the industry in the light of extensive media reports of violence against Indian students, poor quality training courses, abuses of student visa regulations and the collapse of several training colleges. Minister Gillard indicated that the review would be conducted by the former Liberal Party Member of the House of Representatives, Mr Bruce Baird. The review, which was originally scheduled to take place in 2010, will consider all of the laws and regulations governing Australia's education export industry and student visa conditions. Mr Baird indicated that 'everything should be on the table in the review. If single issues are raised about handling of student complaints they should be aired. I haven't been told anything is off the agenda, particularly a need for stronger accreditation and ... control.' Mr Baird indicated his belief that it was possible that Australia's education export market could contract in the short term and stated that the aim of the review was to ensure that the market remained strong in the long term. Minister Gillard stated that 'the Government believes it is important to ensure that we maintain and enhance our hard-won international reputation as a premium destination for international students'. She also indicated that she was considering the appointment of a permanent tertiary education ombudsman. The review will invite submissions and conduct forums with interested parties, with an interim report expected in November 2009.

Parliamentary News

The Victorian Parliament (Assembly and Council) sat from Tuesday 11 August 2009 until Thursday 13 August 2009. Both Houses will next sit from Tuesday 1 September 2009 until Thursday 3 September 2009. The Australian Parliament (House of Representatives and Senate) resumed sitting in the Spring Session on Tuesday 11 August 2009 and will sit until Thursday 20 August 2009.

Seminars for the week beginning 17 August 2009

Day	Seminar Name	Time	Venue
Monday 17/08	Adolescent Anxiety, Depression and Self-Harm Using ICT to Support Curriculum Development and Delivery for Students with Learning Difficulties (Day 1 of 2)	9.00 am – 4.00 pm	Training Centre
		9.00 am – 4.00 pm	Seminar Room
Tuesday 18/08	First Steps Writing – Second Edition (Day 1 or 2) Using ICT to Support Curriculum Development and Delivery for Students with Learning Difficulties (Day 2 of 2)	9.00 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre
		9.00 am – 4.00 pm	Seminar Room
Wednesday 19/08	Practical Strategies and Skills for Managing Behaviour in the Classroom Human Resources Managers Network Meeting Governance Seminar Series – Session 3: Succession Planning	8.30 am – 4.00 pm	Training Centre
		2.00 pm – 4.00 pm	Seminar Room
		6.00 pm – 8.00 pm	Training Centre
Thursday 20/08	LOTE Activities Sharing Day KidsMatter Briefing	9.30 am – 4.00 pm	Training Centre
		2.00 pm – 4.00 pm	Seminar Room
Friday 21/08	Seminar and Networking for Psychologists Working in Schools	9.30 am – 12.00 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.

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