



Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

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[Australian Government Report Calls for Greater Rewards for High-Performing Teachers](#)

The Australian Government has released a report that has called for reforms to the way that the best teachers are rewarded and shared between schools.

[Researcher Argues Against the Use of A to E Report Cards](#)

The ACER Research Conference has heard that the use of A to E reports by schools fails to track students' progress over time and can be harmful for students' self-esteem.

[Research Calls for Teachers to Receive Professional Development on Interpreting National Benchmark Data](#)

Research from New Zealand has suggested that national benchmark testing fails to improve student results if teachers are not taught how to use the results.

[University of Melbourne to Consider Changes to Student Entry System](#)

The University of Melbourne is investigating ways of reducing its reliance on students' tertiary entry scores.

[Legislation to Increase Regulation of International Education Industry](#)

In order to address concerns about the international education industry, the Australian Parliament is debating legislation that would require all educational institutions that accept international students to re-register in 2010 under new conditions.

[Schools Invited to Pilot New Secondary Science Program](#)

The Australian Government has launched a pilot of a new science program designed to increase secondary students' interest in science.

[Parliamentary News](#)

Forthcoming sitting dates for the Australian and Victorian Parliaments.

[Seminars for the week beginning 24 August 2009](#)

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Australian Government Report Calls for Greater Rewards for High-Performing Teachers

Media Release, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, 16/08/09; Media Release, Association of Independent Schools of Victoria, 17/08/09; The Australian, Christian Kerr, 17/08/09; Sydney Morning Herald, Stephanie Peatling, 17/08/09

The Australian Government Minister for Education, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, has released a research report into the development and implementation of performance-based pay arrangements for teachers. The *Rewarding Quality Teaching* report aimed to investigate ways in which 'to improve and maintain the quality of the teaching workforce' that would lead to reforms to 'attract, train, place, develop and retain quality teachers in front of classrooms and leaders in schools'. The report considered best practice teacher remuneration models across the world as well as considering analogous models in areas such as the public service, armed forces and health. It also investigated non-financial options for improving the quality of teaching in Australia. The report argued that the quality of any assessment process would be the key to 'determining the integrity' of any reward system for teachers. It supported the ideas of introducing performance management systems and of rewarding the best performing teachers, but argued against basing rewards solely on student results. The report called for teachers to be given the option to participate in a system that offered greater rewards for working in disadvantaged areas and for participating in professional learning, and which would be assessed against a set of national performance benchmarks. It also recommended that the government provide additional funding to disadvantaged schools to employ the best teachers and that the best teachers be shared between schools 'to ensure all students have access to great teaching' and to prevent 'hoarding' of teachers by those schools which can afford to pay the highest salaries. Minister Gillard indicated that the report had been accepted by the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment and Youth Affairs (now MCEECDYA), and that it would 'form the basis of the reform of teacher remuneration arrangements in each State and Territory'.

The Chief Executive of AISV, Ms Michelle Green, welcomed the release of the report, arguing that it represented 'a welcome step towards supporting and promoting quality teaching'. She indicated that the report and the Minister's comments about the vital importance of teacher quality in determining student outcomes matched the findings of AISV's pilot research into the rewarding of quality teachers. Professor John Hattie from the University of Auckland, who is working with AISV on the research, indicated that AISV's research matched the report's findings that any teacher reward systems needed to be sustainable and accessible, meaningful to teachers, based on clearly established and valid criteria, and evidence-based. He stated that 'we are trialling the development of four key elements: professional standards, professional learning, learning and school communities and improvement in student learning. It promises to be a program that could be implemented in many school systems.' Go to www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/resources/Rewarding_Teacher_Quality-Final_Report_-_GDA_2009.pdf to access a copy of the report.

Researcher Argues Against the Use of A to E Report Cards

The Advertiser, Lauren Novak, 15/08/09; The Age, Farrah Tomazin, 15/08/09

The Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER), Professor Geoff Masters, has argued that the use of an A to E grading system in schools fails to demonstrate how children's learning progresses over time and can lower students' self-esteem. In an address to the ACER research conference, Professor Masters argued that students learn better when they are able to see the progress that they have made in the past and when they receive feedback on what they need to do in the future. He claimed that A to E grading systems that rank students against expected performance 'can influence and reinforce students' views of their capacity to learn' and that 'their underlying growth is masked'. He also argued that, where students were not meeting expectations or making progress 'then this needs to be made very transparent...I don't think we should hide the fact that a student is not making progress, but some children are performing below their age peers yet they're still making good progress. That needs to be recognised.'

Research Calls for Teachers to Receive Professional Development on Interpreting National Benchmark Data

Sydney Morning Herald, Anna Patty, 18/08/09

Research has suggested that national benchmark testing does not improve student performance unless teachers are taught how to interpret data correctly and to assist students to make the appropriate improvements. The University of Auckland research investigated 300 New Zealand schools that took part in a professional development program designed to help teachers to interpret and use student assessment data. The study found that the students of teachers who participated in the professional development achieved significant improvements in their literacy and numeracy results, with students who performed worse in initial assessments showing the greatest benefit. The author of the report, Professor Helen Timperley, argued at the ACER research conference that education systems wrongly assumed that providing test results to teachers would enable them 'automatically' to improve student learning. She argued that 'school leaders need to know how to lead the kinds of change in thinking and practice that are required for teachers to use the data'.

University of Melbourne to Consider Changes to Student Entry System

The Age, Farrah Tomazin, 17/08/09

The University of Melbourne has indicated that it is considering a change to the way that it selects students, to place less reliance on students' tertiary entry scores. An internal discussion paper has argued that students' Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER) scores were not always a precise measure of academic performance. In particular, the *Refining Our Strategy* paper noted that students 'who suffer from systemic or educational disadvantage' were less likely to receive high ENTER scores, regardless of their academic potential. The paper argued that students from schools with lower average ENTER scores tended to perform better at university than students from schools with higher average ENTER scores and suggested that 'preparation in some schools is focused on achieving ENTER, rather than skills for university'. The paper outlined a range of options for student selection, including:

- aptitude tests for students with lower ENTER scores

- civics tests or personal essays for students who wish to attend the university that would require the student to outline 'the contribution to the public good they have made – and intend to make, as a result of their education at Melbourne'
- an expansion of special-entry access schemes.

The Vice-chancellor of the university, Professor Glyn Davis emphasised that no decision had yet been made, but asked 'are there things we could do to supplement it [ENTER] to get a broader range of opportunities?'

Legislation to Increase Regulation of International Education Industry

The Age, Sushi Das, 20/08/09

Minister Gillard has introduced legislative amendments into the Australian Parliament to provide greater protection to international students. If passed, the *Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Re-registration of Providers and Other Measures) Bill 2009*, would require all institutions that are registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) to re-register in 2010 under tighter guidelines. Universities, colleges and schools would be required to demonstrate that their main purpose was to provide education and to demonstrate that they had the capacity to provide education of a satisfactory standard. They would also be required to publish lists of any overseas or Australian-based education agents that they had used to recruit international students. Minister Gillard also announced that the associated regulations may require registered institutions to use only agents who are trained and registered in their own country and may require institutions to maintain websites that allow international students to make anonymous comments about agents. In her speech to Parliament, Minister Gillard stated that the legislation was necessary to address concerns about an industry that was 'growing so rapidly with insufficient checks and balances, unfortunately attracting a small number of unscrupulous operators for whom the provision of quality education is not their first motivation'.

Schools Invited to Pilot New Secondary Science Program

Media Release, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, 17/08/09

Minister Gillard has announced that the Australian Government will allocate \$2 million towards the launch of a new program to encourage secondary school students to study science. The *Science and Technology Education Leveraging Relevance* program (STELR), which focuses on the topic of renewable energy, has been designed by the Australian Academy of Technological Science and Engineering (ATSE) to increase the interest of students in years 9 and 10 in science by taking a hands-on, inquiry-based approach to the teaching of science. Australian Government funding will be used to support the implementation of the program in 180 secondary schools across Australia in 2010. Participating schools will receive curriculum materials and professional development to implement the program in their curriculum. If schools are interested in becoming one of the 180 initial participants, please contact Mr Peter Pentland at ATSE at peter.pentland@atse.org.au or on (03) 9864 0906. Go to www.stelr.org.au for further information on the STELR project.

Parliamentary News

The Australian Parliament (House of Representatives and Senate) resumed sitting in the Spring Session on Tuesday 11 August 2009 and rose on Thursday 20 August 2009. Both Houses will next sit from Monday 7 September 2009 until Thursday 17 September 2009. The Victorian Parliament (Assembly and Council) rose on Thursday 13 August 2009. Both Houses will next sit from Tuesday 1 September 2009 until Thursday 3 September 2009.

Seminars for the week beginning 24 August 2009

Day	Seminar Name	Time	Venue
Monday 24/08	Pilot Literacy and Numeracy Network Leadership Conference	8.30 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre & Seminar Room
Tuesday 25/08	First Steps Writing – Second Edition (Day 2 of 2)	9.00 am – 3.30 pm	Seminar Room
Wednesday 26/08	Mind Matters Level 2 – Two Day Planning Workshop	9.00 am – 4.00 pm	Training Centre Seminar Room
	TAA 40104 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (Day 3 of 4)	9.30 am – 3.30 pm	
Thursday 27/08	WebQuests 2.0: A Richer Web Improves Good Ideas	9.00 am – 3.30 pm	Seminar Room
	Mind Matters Level 2 – Two Day Planning Workshop	9.00 am – 4.00 pm	Training Centre
Friday 28/08	Risk Management – The Basics (Day 2 of 2)	9.00 am – 5.00 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

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