



Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

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[Report Recommends Greater Responsibility for School Principals](#)

A report prepared for the Australian Government has called for the devolution of decision-making power from Departments of Education to individual government school principals.

[Australian Government to Host Conference for Principals](#)

The principals of 150 Australian schools will be invited to Canberra to discuss how the Australian Government can support improved student outcomes.

[Teacher Understanding of Technology Linked to Student Learning Outcomes](#)

A survey of primary, secondary and tertiary students has revealed the importance of teachers having appropriate knowledge of Information and Communications Technology.

[Australian Education Union Releases Annual Teacher Supply Report](#)

An annual survey of government school principals has revealed concerns about teacher supply shortages.

[Parliamentary News](#)

Forthcoming sitting dates for the Australian and Victorian Parliaments.

[Seminars for the week beginning 2 November 2009](#)

No seminars are scheduled at AISV for the week of the Melbourne Cup.

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Report Recommends Greater Responsibility for School Principals

The Australian, Justine Ferrari, 27/10/09

A report commissioned by the previous Australian Government has recommended that state and territory governments give greater control over the operations of government schools to principals and school boards. The *Principal Autonomy Research Project* report argues that decision-making should devolve to the school level, in order better to respond to the particular needs of individual students and communities. The report indicates that government departments of education should be responsible for setting curriculum and standards frameworks and school accountabilities, and would only take greater responsibility for the running of schools where it was more efficient to do so, such as for very small or remote schools. However, the report cautioned against giving school the ability to change student selection criteria. The report also recommended that school principals received formal training as managers to ensure that they are able to run the business of schools, that compliance and paperwork for school principals be reduced and that school budgets be established so that they reflected actual, rather than average teacher salaries. The Australian Government Minister for Education, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, claimed that the report supported the reforms being made by the Australian Government and argued that 'it is important that principals have the support and flexibility they need to respond to the needs of their students'. Visit www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/QualityTeaching/researchandpublications to access a copy of the report.

Australian Government to Host Conference for Principals

Media Release, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, 25/10/09; Sydney Morning Herald, Stephanie Peatling, 25/10/09; The Advertiser, Lauren Novak, 26/10/09; The Age, Dan Harrison, 26/10/09; Canberra Times, Emma Macdonald, 26/10/09;

Minister Gillard has announced that she will host a conference for school principals to discuss the Australian Government's 'Education Revolution'. Principals from 150 government and non-government, primary and secondary schools across Australia will be nominated by principal associations to attend the *National Conversation with Principals Forum* on 10 and 11 November 2009. The forum will discuss issues including 'the new national curriculum, assessment, reporting, literacy and numeracy, school infrastructure, Indigenous education and student wellbeing'. Minister Gillard stated that the conference's aim was to enable the Australian Government to conduct 'a national conversation with school principals about the challenges they are facing on the ground' and to learn how the government can help schools to improve educational outcomes for students.

Teacher Understanding of Technology Linked to Student Learning Outcomes

Media Release, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, 22/10/09; Australian Financial Review, Rachael Bolton, 23/10/09

Minister Gillard has released a report that investigates the importance of teachers' understanding of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and its use to improve student learning outcomes. The University of Canberra's *Listening to Students' and Educators' Voices: Research Findings* report was based on a survey of over 1000 students from primary, secondary and tertiary institutions and aimed to understand the expectations, experiences and requirements of students and educators. It found that students believed that technology was a vital learning aid that provided teachers with a greater opportunity to tailor education to students' needs and that it increased students' motivation to learn. To access a copy of the report, visit

www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/DigitalEducationRevolution/Resources/Documents/ListeningToStudentsVoices.pdf

Australian Education Union Releases Annual Teacher Supply Report

Media Release, Australian Education Union, 27/10/09; The Age, Dan Harrison, 27/10/09; The Australian, Angus Hohenboken, 27/10/09; Daily Telegraph, Bruce McDougall, 27/10/09; Sydney Morning Herald, Anna Patty & Dan Harrison, 27/10/09; Canberra Times, Emily Sherlock, 28/10/09

Following the release of a new report, the Australian Education Union (AEU) has called for the creation of a national strategy to address teacher supply problems. The AEU's annual *State of Our Schools Survey* involved 1472 government school principals across Australia and found that 59 per cent of respondents had experienced difficulties with teacher supply in the past year, and that 57 per cent believed that the problems were getting worse. The survey also found that, as a result of teacher shortages, a large number of government schools had staff teaching subjects for which they are not qualified. The survey found that almost 60 per cent of government secondary schools had at least one teacher who was not qualified to teach a subject that they were teaching, while 32 per cent of all schools faced the same problem. Schools reported that mathematics teachers were the hardest to access, followed by technology, computer science, languages, science and music teachers. Of the survey respondents, 50.8 per cent indicated that the Australian Government's top education priority should be investing more in teachers or increasing teacher numbers. The AEU recommended that the Australian and state and territory Governments introduce a strategy that:

- provided better pay to experienced teachers to keep them in the classroom
- offered scholarships to encourage students to undertake teacher training
- supported teachers in the toughest schools; and
- provided better housing for teachers in regional and remote areas.

Parliamentary News

The Australian Parliament (House of Representatives and Senate) rose on Thursday 29 October 2009. Both Houses will sit for the last time in 2009 from Monday 16 November 2009 until Thursday 26 November 2009. The Victorian Parliament (Assembly and Council) rose on Thursday 15 October 2009. Both Houses will next sit from Tuesday 10 November 2009 until Thursday 12 November 2009.

Seminars for the week beginning 2 November 2009

No seminars are scheduled at AISV for the week of the Melbourne Cup.

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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