

Media Release

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Don't focus on league tables says Independent Schools Victoria

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Independent Schools Victoria is urging parents to avoid focusing on league tables created from raw numbers of school results found on the Australian Government's My School website.

Chief Executive Ms Michelle Green said today that the raw numbers can be misleading and parents should consider how the school meets the family's educational, philosophical, religious, cultural and social values.

'The factors that affect student outcomes are quality of teachers, school leadership, morale, agreement on educational goals and the school's investment in improving teacher practice. Also important are the facilities, the culture of the school, staff and other students, and the extracurricular activities and other programs that are offered.'

Ms Green said that Independent Schools Victoria has reservations about the extent of the information on the website and does not believe that it reflects the full experience that each school offers.

She noted that within nine months of being elected, the Prime Minister, Mr Kevin Rudd said in August 2008 that 'simplistic league tables don't really tell us how well a school is performing'.

In a statement released yesterday, Mr Rudd and the Education Minister, Ms Julia Gillard, said, 'parents don't just want to know how a school is performing but whether their child will enjoy the school experience and how the school will engage with them as parents'.

They suggested that in future the My School website could ask parents what they think are the strengths of the school, as part of a balanced scorecard or comprehensive survey of experiences and their satisfaction.

Ms Green said this information is published on independent schools' websites and in their information brochures.

'We are concerned that in the name of transparency, new reporting demands will be made that duplicate information schools already provide to parents and prospective parents, putting at risk core educational functions,' Ms Green said.