



# 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](mailto:aisv@ais.vic.edu.au)

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## [Policy Paper Calls for Funding Equity between Schools and School Sectors](#)

The Centre for Independent Studies has called for a 'child-centred' funding model for schools, in which funding follows individual students, regardless of the school that they attend.

## [Survey Investigates Parental Attitudes to School Performance Information](#)

A survey conducted by the Australian Parents Council has asked parents of students in non-government schools about their attitudes to the publication of school performance information.

## [New South Wales Government to Permit the Publication of School Performance Information](#)

The New South Wales Government has announced that it intends to overturn legislation that prevents newspapers from publishing league tables of school performance information.

## [Coalition Ministers Announce Coordinated School Bullying Approach](#)

Coalition Education spokesmen have announced that they would introduce policies to prevent bullying in Australian schools.

## [Statistics Released on Australian Students' Performance in Mathematics and Science Testing](#)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has released data on the performance of Australian students in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.

## [Artists in Schools Program](#)

The Victorian Government is providing funding for professional artists to work in schools.

## [Seminars for the week beginning 13 July 2009](#)

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### Policy Paper Calls for Funding Equity Between Schools and School Sectors

*The Australian, Jennifer Buckingham, 02/07/09; The Age, Miki Perkins, 02/07/09*

The Centre for Independent Studies has released a report calling for the introduction of a 'child-centred school funding system'. Jennifer Buckingham's *In Defence of Non-Government Schools* paper has claimed that 'it is highly likely' that the Australian Government's review of the SES funding model for non-government schools will lead to significant reforms, and argued that 'it is therefore important to reiterate the reasons for public funding of non-government schools, with a rational and ethical defence of non-government schools and their contribution to the public good and society'. Ms Buckingham argued that non-government schools deserve to receive government support because:

- non-government schools are educators of the public
- non-government schools play an important role in democracy
- non-government schools contribute to society
- public funding of non-government schools gives parents choice and
- denying parents a choice in schooling is immoral.

In order to achieve funding equity between all schools, Ms Buckingham advocated a model under which funding was linked to individual children, rather than to schools or school sectors. She argued that all students should receive an 'education entitlement' which was weighted so that children with greater learning needs received greater funding. The report concluded that 'the only way to end the debate that pits sector against sector and shifts blame between governments is to create a single funding source and to fund children, not schools. This way, the needs of children and young people would be paramount, and many more families would be able to actively choose the school [that] they believe offers the best opportunities.' Go to [www.cis.org.au/issue\\_analysis/IA112/IA112.pdf](http://www.cis.org.au/issue_analysis/IA112/IA112.pdf) to access a copy of the report.

### Survey Investigates Parental Attitudes to School Performance Information

*The Age, Farrah Tomazin, 30/06/09; Canberra Times, Emily Sherlock, 01/07/09*

A survey of non-government school parents has investigated their attitudes to comparisons of the performance of their children's school against like schools. The national survey of more than 1000 families, which was conducted by the Australian Parents' Council (APC), found that one in five families surveyed wanted to compare the performance of like schools while, two thirds of respondents indicated that they would prefer to compare their children's school against the performance of all schools. Approximately 14 per cent of respondents argued that no comparisons should be made between schools. When making comparisons between schools, 25 per cent of respondents believed that the family of income of students should be taken into consideration while more than 50 per cent believed that the number of students at each school from a non-English speaking background was relevant. The survey found that parents generally wanted schools to be more transparent and that they wanted governments to provide additional funding for both high and low achievers. It also found that parents welcomed the opportunity to assess their children's school on a range of performance indicators but that they lacked confidence in doing so. The report concluded that 'the parent community is vulnerable to simplistic political arguments of the kind commonly heard when league tables or funding are publicly debated – that schools should be ranked by test results, and funding determined accordingly. While this line of argument is used mostly in reference to government schools, non-government schools are not immune.' Go to [www.ais.vic.edu.au/schools/pubs/what\\_parents\\_want\\_to\\_know\\_apc.pdf](http://www.ais.vic.edu.au/schools/pubs/what_parents_want_to_know_apc.pdf) to access a copy of the APC report.

### New South Wales Government to Permit the Publication of School Performance Information

*The Australian, Justine Ferrari & Imre Salusinszky, 07/07/09; Sydney Morning Herald, Alexandra Smith, 07/07/09; The Age, Farrah Tomazin, 09/07/09*

The Premier of New South Wales, The Hon. Nathan Rees, MLA, has announced that the New South Wales Government will reintroduce legislation into Parliament after the Opposition and minor parties amended the *Education Act 1990* to prevent newspapers from printing league tables of school performance information. The New South Wales Government had introduced an amendment to the Act to remove a ban on the publication of school performance information, to ensure that the state could comply with Australian Government funding requirements. However, the Coalition and the Australian Greens amended the legislation in the Upper House, introducing fines of up to \$55,000 for organisations and \$5000 for individuals who publish tables that compare school results. The leader of the New South Wales Opposition, Mr Barry O'Farrell, MLA, stated that it was not Liberal Party policy 'to stigmatise great teachers or great students' and that parents were still able to obtain information on school performance through schools' annual reports, indicating that the Opposition stood behind 'any effort to provide parents and the public with greater information about their school's performance'. Mr O'Farrell also stated that they were opposed to 'crude league tables that don't reflect the differences between schools and that don't reflect the fact that...the disadvantage that exists within the communities in which they operate will inevitably rank them at the lower end of any bureaucratic scale.' The federal Shadow Minister for Education, The Hon. Christopher Pyne, MP, claimed that the federal Liberal Party also did not support 'simplistic league tables', but did believe in providing parents with useful information about school performance. The Chairman of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, Professor Barry McGaw, argued that 'it can be damaging if people make unfair comparisons [between schools]...often on very informal and incomplete data'. The Victorian Shadow Minister for Education, Mr Martin Dixon, MLA, indicated that the Victorian Coalition's education policies were still to be finalised. Premier Rees indicated that the Government would move to strike out the amendment in the next sitting of Parliament in September 2009.

### Coalition Ministers Announce Coordinated School Bullying Approach

*Media Release, The Hon. Christopher Pyne, MP, 07/07/09*

Mr Pyne has announced that Coalition shadow education ministers have agreed to implement a consistent policy approach to bullying in schools. The shadow ministers agree that they would develop a joint anti-bullying framework, against which each jurisdiction would be accountable. The framework proposes:

- the introduction of powers to give greater flexibility for Principals to deal with bullying
- an extension of principals' authority to deal with cyber-bullying committed by students off-campus
- the creation of minimum standards of school reporting to ensure that parents who have made complaints are included in the process of dealing with conflict resolution
- the provision of improved resources and education for teachers, students and school communities
- a national audit of school bullying policies and practices to ensure that all schools are working towards the best practice model that will suit their community.

### Statistics Released on Australian Students' Performance in Mathematics and Science Testing

*The Australian, Paul Maley, 01/07/09; The West Australian, Andrew Tillett, 01/07/09*

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has released a report analysing the mathematics and science skills of Australian students. The *Australian Social Trends* publication includes a *Student Achievement in Maths and Science* article which has analysed data from the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) for students in years 4 and 8. The report found that Australian students had largely performed at or above international averages. It also found that the average performance of Australian students in Year 4 had improved compared to the 2003 TIMMS, but that the performance of Year 8 students had declined. Over 70 per cent of the participating Australian students attained the intermediate international benchmark in Year 4 mathematics, Year 4 science and Year 8 science, while 60 per cent of Australian Year 8 students attained the intermediate benchmark in mathematics. Over a third of participating students attained the high or advanced benchmarks for science and for Year 4 mathematics while just over 20 per cent of Year 8 students attained the high or advanced benchmarks for mathematics. Ten per cent of Australian students were unable to attain the low benchmark in each of the tests. Within Australia, Year 4 students in Victorian and New South Wales performed significantly better than in other states while there was little statistical difference between the performance of Year 8 students in different states and territories. Overall, Australian students were ranked 14<sup>th</sup> for Year 4 and Year 8 mathematics and 13<sup>th</sup> for science. Unlike many of the other countries that participated in TIMMS, the report also found that there was little difference between the performance of Australian boys and girls in mathematics and science in Year 4, but that boys performed better than girls in Year 8. To access a copy of the publication, go to

[www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/LookupAttach/4102.0Publication30.06.094/\\$File/41020\\_Mathsandscience.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/LookupAttach/4102.0Publication30.06.094/$File/41020_Mathsandscience.pdf)

### Artists in Schools Program

*Media Release, The Hon. Lynne Kosky, MLA, 06/07/09*

The Victorian Minister for the Arts, The Hon. Lynne Kosky, MLA, has invited Victorian schools to participate in the 2009 Artists in Schools Program. Under the program, government and non-government primary and secondary schools are eligible to receive grants of up to \$6500 to support professional artists to work with students. Artists work in the schools with students from years Prep to 10 for up to 20 days to create a project in any art form. Free information sessions will be held in Bendigo, Horsham, Melbourne, Frankston, Morwell, Warrnambool and online during July 2009. Go to [www.arts.vic.gov.au/content/Public/Funding\\_Programs/Education\\_Partnerships/Artists\\_in\\_Schools.aspx](http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/content/Public/Funding_Programs/Education_Partnerships/Artists_in_Schools.aspx) for further information about the Program or to register to attend an information session.

### Seminars for the week beginning 13 July 2009

Day	Seminar Name	Time	Venue
Monday 13/07			
Tuesday 14/07			
Wednesday 15/07			
Thursday 16/07	First Steps Speaking and Listening – Second Edition: Day 1 of 2	9.00 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre
Friday 17/07	WebQuests in a Web 2.0 World: Day 1 of 3	9.00 am – 3.30 pm	Seminar Room

The Seminar Room is located at 20 Garden Street. The Training Centre and Board Room are located at 30 Garden Street.

*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](mailto:aisv@ais.vic.edu.au)