



Australian Council of State School Organisations

The National Voice of Parents of Children in Australia's Public Schools and Their School Communities

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

Volume 3 Number 18, 26 May 2009

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PARENTS & SCHOOLS IN PARTNERSHIP

Parents and teachers have more influence than peers

University of Sydney Media Release, 14 May 2009

A University of Sydney study has found that getting on well with parents and teachers has a strong positive influence on adolescents' academic outcomes - and a bigger influence than getting on with peers.

These findings provide new hope to parents and teachers who too often assume that they cannot compete with the power of the peer group.

"Parents and teachers who might feel powerless during adolescence have a bigger influence on academic motivation than they think - sometimes up to three times the impact of peers," said Andrew Martin, an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education and Social Work and the study's lead researcher.

"If you think you have no impact, stick with it because you do, and not just in the early years - at all stages of secondary school teachers and parents have a significant impact." He also cautioned that the flipside of the research is that academic motivation suffers when a child does not get on well with teachers or parents. "The study clearly points to the importance of positive connections and quality relationships with teachers and parents in adolescents' lives."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ph29a5>

Parental involvement and children's school achievement: evidence for mediating

processes

Maria A. Rogers, Jennifer Theule, Bruce A. Ryan, et al, Canadian Journal of School Psychology, Volume 24 Number 1, 19 March 2009; Pages 34–57

Parents' involvement in their children's education has been linked with children's academic success and attitudes toward learning. The authors undertook an analysis to determine the ways in which children's own attitudes and their parents' involvement in their learning at home influenced academic achievement.

One hundred and thirty-one Canadian Grade 5 and 6 students of European, middle-class backgrounds completed two surveys relating to their parents' home educational behaviours, and to their own academic and personal self-concept.

Students' teachers reported on students' academic competence, encompassing academic skills and behaviours, and attitudes toward school and learning.

The results indicated that school-focused parental involvement at home was linked with school achievement, but this association was mediated by children's academic competence.

Mothers' involvement in homework and the home learning environment improved academic achievement, as did their emotional support. Fathers' involvement in home learning such as reading and time management likewise produced positive results; however, the additional academic pressure exerted by fathers was negatively associated with academic competence, and therefore achievement, as competence and achievement were found to be directly linked.

Purchase full text at <http://tinyurl.com/qnohl>

COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Education Week focus should be on stopping school league tables

John Kaye MP: 25 May 2009

NSW Education Minister Verity Firth's enthusiastic celebration of Education Week rings hollow given her support for her federal colleague's school ranking website, according to Greens NSW MP John Kaye.

Dr Kaye said: "Many teachers, parents and students face this week's festivities wondering what will happen to their school if the website goes ahead.

"The 'league tables' ranking that will inevitably follow will undermine the achievements of schools that do an excellent job of serving disadvantaged communities.

"The next five days are a great opportunity to celebrate the achievements of teachers, students and parents.

"They are also an important time to let politicians know that publishing common test results and the economic backgrounds of students for all schools on a single website is an invitation to create comparisons of individual institutions.

"The Greens are asking all school communities to celebrate Education Week by helping to stop league tables," Dr Kaye said.

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/orncwe>

Rudd Government committed to greater transparency in schools

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 26 May 2009

As part of the Education Revolution, the Rudd Government is committed to a new era of transparency to drive improvement in our schools and better target resources.

The Rudd Government is not interested in simplistic league tables which rank schools according to raw test scores. For instance, schools will not be ranked according to NAPLAN results.

School profiles agreed at the last Education Ministers' meeting will give accurate data on individual school performance and important, relevant data about school context, including student background data.

These transparency measures will give parents, communities and the public much better information about the performance of our schools.

Public debate and analysis of school performance information should be responsible and robust. The Rudd Government believes that it is in the public interest that this debate and analysis is well-informed by accurate, properly contextualised information.

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/qkoy6n>

Stand-off looms over high school league tables

Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, May 26, 2009

HIGH school principals are threatening to withhold results of the national literacy and numeracy tests from the Federal Government to prevent the creation of school league tables.

Such a move could derail the agenda of the federal Education Minister, Julia Gillard, for transparency about schools and the new national report cards that will rank the performance of schools of a similar size and with similar demographics.

The president of the NSW Secondary Principals' Council, Jim McAlpine, said releasing data that could be used to rank schools was destructive. "If the government is not going to protect the data, then we won't give them the data," Mr. McAlpine said.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/qhozfw>

TOWARDS AN AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Students face national benchmarks

Caroline Milburn, The Age, May 18, 2009

Teachers will no longer be the sole judge of a student's work, after a landmark decision by the National Curriculum Board to introduce year-by-year achievement standards for pupils.

For the first time, all teachers in Australian schools will have to use the same achievement benchmarks to measure student progress. The decision is aimed at overcoming flaws in the current system, in which assessments by teachers can vary widely between classrooms, schools and states and territories.

Achievement standards will be developed for each year level from prep to year 12 for English, maths, science and history. Teachers will also be given annotated samples of student work to show the differences in quality and cut-off points for work judged to be worth an A, B, C and D grading.

The board outlines its decisions on standards in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* and other consultation papers.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/o8x8ry>

Tested by a test too many

Philip Riley, May 25, 2009

Educators appear to make the worst learners.

Evidence for this can be found in the recent decision by the National Curriculum Board (Education, May 18). The board has decided that all students will now be judged by a single standard every year - a one-size-fits-all approach.

The effect, if not the aim, of this decision will be to limit the influence of individual teachers on students. It will force teachers to conduct tests for external examination, and just as happened in the US the tests will become the curriculum.

Sensible teachers will adopt a "teach to the test" instruction method because their job and promotion prospects will rely on these scores. And, just as in the US, our version of "no child left behind" will widen, not lessen the educational gap between the haves and have-nots. So instead of following the US model, why don't we learn from its mistakes and follow a better educational approach?

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/pv8oyb>

CYBER-BULLYING

Is cyber-bullying a crime?

Nick Abrahams & Victoria Dunn, Sydney Morning Herald, 21 May 2009

Cyber-bullying is back in the spotlight. Earlier this month the federal government announced it had established a Youth Advisory Group, consisting of young Australians, to advise it on cyber-bullying and other online issues.

Within a week came the report that two year 9 students had been forced to leave a Sydney girls' school for cyber-bullying. As a result, I have been asked a number of times - shouldn't there be laws to stop this?

The answer is that there are some laws which cover the most aggressive forms of cyber-bullying but, unless you want to start filling jails with 15-year-olds, criminal sanctions are not the answer.

Bullying has been around for a long time. Recently, many schools have really focused on the issue and there has been some success in reducing the incidence of traditional school yard bullying. However, the internet is the bully's new school yard. Studies have shown that cyber-bullying is widespread, with at least one in three teenagers the victim of cyber-bullying.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/ov5c7l>

Nick Abrahams is a Partner and Sydney Chairman of the law firm Deacons. Victoria Dunn is a lawyer with Deacons. This article is general in nature and should not be relied upon as a substitute for detailed legal advice.

Bullying can lead to mental illness, says study

Independent (UK) Friday, 1 May 2009

Bullying can increase the risk of children suffering from psychotic symptoms by up to four times, researchers revealed today.

Effects included hallucinations, paranoid delusions – such as believing they are being spied on – and irrational thought.

Psychologists followed 6,437 children from birth to 13 years. The children took part in annual face-to-face interviews, as well as psychological and physical tests. Parents were also asked to complete questionnaires about their sons' and daughters' development.

At the age of 13, the children were interviewed about their experiences of psychotic symptoms in the previous six months. Those who suffered physical or emotional bullying were twice as likely to develop psychotic symptoms by early adolescence as children who were not bullied. Children who experienced sustained bullying over a number of years could be four times more at risk.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/p8e3lt>

Bullied boys: Why bright lads are being picked on

Hilary Wilce, The Independent, Thursday, 14 May 2009

A recent study of gifted children in nine state secondary schools, by researchers at Roehampton University, has confirmed that clever pupils, especially boys, can be bullied and will "dumb down" to fit in.

Being funny, good at sports and having a more disruptive pupil as a friend also helps. "Some pupils are able to maintain popularity with peers in spite of their high academic achievement," says Becky Francis, professor of education.

"What appears to be a fundamental facilitator of this is their physical appearance, and for boys, their physical ability at sport."

Bullying the class "swot" has always been popular, but today's pupils say that the popularity of American high-school films, which often feature stereotypical boy geeks, has made it worse.

They say that in "ordinary" state schools it often feels as if there aren't other intelligent pupils around, and they believe that teachers make it worse by not realising that bullying is going on.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/qbtnet>

Parent 'No-confidence' vote on bullying

Callie Watson, *The Advertiser*, May 26, 2009

PARENTS have "lost confidence" in schools' ability to deal with bullying, with up to one in three saying their child had been bullied and attempts to stop it were unsuccessful.

An Education Now survey reveals a high level of bullying at school, with 41.3 per cent of parents admitting their child had been a victim.

Of the 259 parents who responded, almost one third (29.2 per cent) said their child had been bullied and the school had not solved the problem.

This includes one mother who was told by a teacher that her son needed to "toughen up like the old days" after she approached him about bullying on three separate occasions.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/p2474q>



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RECYCLING TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Only two weeks to go for 'Old Phones, New Fence Posts' Challenge

Randal Markey, 22 May 2009

There are only 10 days to go for schools to hand in their old mobile phones, batteries and accessories for recycling before June 5 as part of the 'Old Phones, New Fence Posts' Schools Challenge.

MobileMuster, the official recycling program of the mobile phone industry, is conducting the challenge.

For every 5 kg of old mobile phones handed in for recycling by schools during May and until, World Environment Day – June 5, MobileMuster and Australian Composite Technology (ACT) will donate 1 Plasmar fence post to communities affected by the Victorian bush fires.

Rose Read, Manager of Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association's (AMTA) official recycling program, MobileMuster, says: "The challenge is a great way for students to learn about the importance of recycling old mobile phones, do something positive for the planet this World Environment Day and assist communities recovering from the Victorian bush fires, all at the same time.

"MobileMuster is aiming to collect 3,600 kg of mobile phones for recycling, which will result in the donation of 720 fence posts to the Baw Baw Shire, the official recipients of the Plasmar fence posts.

Students and schools will also be rewarded for their efforts where each student who collects the most mobile phones at their school receiving a School Champion certificate. The student who collects the most mobile phones in their state will receive a Milton Book Pack to the value of \$100. The student who collects the most mobile phones for recycling nationally will receive a Milton Family Experience Pack to the value of \$250. School efforts will also be rewarded.

Read more at <http://www.mobilemuster.com.au>

Randal Markey is Communications Manager, Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association <http://www.amta.org.au>

BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

National School Pride delivers \$1.3 billion to 9,490 Australian schools

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 21 May 2009

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today announced that 3,496 Australian schools will receive \$439.7 million for 4,513 minor infrastructure and refurbishment projects under the second and final round of the National School Pride (NSP) program.

The Rudd Government is undertaking the largest school modernisation program in Australia's history to support local jobs, stimulate every local economy and invest in important long term infrastructure.

Together with Round One, the Rudd Government's National School Pride program will deliver \$1.3 billion to 9,490 eligible primary and secondary schools in every State and Territory for 13,176 projects to help stimulate jobs in every local community.

A full list of successful schools and their planned projects is available at:
<http://tinyurl.com/q5ucut>

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Aboriginal education needs goals

Justine Ferrari, The Australian, May 25, 2009

INDIGENOUS leaders are calling for a national education action plan to be adopted at the next meeting of state and federal governments, setting out specific goals to be reviewed annually.

A working group of indigenous leaders headed by Australian of the Year Mick Dodson is proposing a 25-year action plan along the lines of the compact on indigenous health signed by government and key stakeholders last year.

The initiative comes at the instigation of the Australian Education Union, which approached Professor Dodson to spearhead the development of a long-term plan to overcome the piecemeal approach that has characterised efforts to improve indigenous education in the past.

Professor Dodson has formed a working group with representatives of the AEU and leading Aborigines, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice and Race Discrimination Commissioner Tom Calma and executive director of the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute Chris Sarra, to develop ideas for the plan.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/q2fpp7>

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation: Sowing the patch works

Catharine Munro, Sydney Morning Herald, May 12, 2009

Apart from writing about food, Stephanie Alexander works full-time for her not-for-profit foundation that establishes vegetable patches and kitchens in primary schools. Of the 13-strong staff of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation, she is the only one not paid.

The calling to spread the word on healthy food was inspired by a childhood home where good nosh was important and it was natural to put effort into the garden. "We just assumed that that's how people grew up," she says. "It took me a while to realise how unusual and rare that was ... [people are] making themselves sick by the food they choose. I think it's possible to change that."

The key is introducing young children to good food, from planting the seed to sinking a fork into a pocket of pumpkin ravioli.

After Alexander started her pilot program at Collingwood College in 2001, she entranced a former Victorian education minister, Lynne Kosky, with the sight of children sitting happily at a table eating. There are 27 schools now on board.

Federal funding flowed after an election promise in 2007, giving Alexander her ticket to go national. Schools can now apply for money to build the facilities and staff a garden and kitchen for two years.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/pxyrd2>
More about the Foundation: <http://tinyurl.com/axxp32>
More about the Grants Program: <http://tinyurl.com/qlp7j2>

Cute creatures mask the effort to sell teens alcohol

Julie Robotham, Sydney Morning Herald, May 18, 2009

Animated animals, easily recognised popular music and simple, engaging storylines feature prominently in the alcohol advertisements that children see on television most often, according to researchers who say the alcohol industry is circumventing controls to appeal directly to young teenagers.

Despite restrictions on advertising alcohol before 8.30pm on free-to-air TV, youth in Sydney aged 13 to 17 were exposed to only 10 per cent less alcohol advertising than those aged 18 to 24, a Curtin University study has found. And children aged up to 12 saw just under half that amount on average.

"Most of the brand competition is for younger drinkers," said Rob Donovan, Professor of Behavioural Research in the university's Faculty of Health Sciences, who led the study. "You're wanting to grab a drinker in the younger age group and expose them to your brand."

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/rap4yy>

The cost of keeping tobacco in sight

A letter to the Editor:

Concerns by the Association of Convenience Stores about costs to shopkeepers of complying

with NSW's new out-of-sight tobacco laws (Sun-Herald, May 24) are ill-founded.

The Deloitte report quoted says the "\$6-10,000" figure is based only on shopkeepers' estimates of what they think the costs will be. Add to this that the tobacco companies are likely - based on overseas experience - to pay for most if not all of the new shelving, and shopkeepers are left with little cause for worry.

It would be of far greater concern if, after all the consultation with retailers and the rest of the community that led to these laws being passed, tobacco display advertising were to be left in view for any longer than necessary – since that's been shown to encourage children to smoke. Now that would be a real cost.

Stafford Sanders

Protecting Children from Tobacco coalition (40 organisations) <http://www.ashaust.org.au>

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Investing in community education and training for tomorrow

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 20 May 2009

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today invited community education and training providers to apply for funding under the \$100 million Investing in Community Education and Training program.

Investing in Community Education and Training is the third element of the Rudd Government's \$500 million Teaching and Learning Capital Fund for Vocational Education and Training.

The initiative recognises the unique value of community education and training and its role in providing thousands of Australians with pathways into further education and training or employment. This is the first time the Australian Government has made a major capital investment directly into the community education sector.

\$100 million in funding will develop or upgrade infrastructure, plant and equipment to maximise community education and training delivery.

The Investing in Community Education and Training guidelines are available online at <http://tinyurl.com/rdqgun>

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Code for childcare centres on hold

Natasha Bitá, The Australian, May 22, 2009

TOUGH new standards for childcare centres have been put on ice after the federal Government's quality watchdog warned that some centres would fail them.

The Government also appears to have ditched its election promise for an A-to-E rating system to let parents know how well a centre cares for their children.

Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education and Childcare Maxine McKew yesterday revealed the Government would need to go back to the Council of Australian Governments in July before introducing the standards, which were originally scheduled to be phased in on July 1 last year.

"Implementing the national quality agenda is a priority -- but we are going to take the time we need to work with the sector to get it right," Ms McKew told the Family Day Care Australia conference in Hobart. "It will be a phased implementation."

Ms McKew said the first phase would be the Early Years Learning Framework -- a kiddies' curriculum that in its early draft form was ridiculed for its political correctness.

The final version has not been released publicly, but Ms McKew said it would spell out specific learning outcomes for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers. The rest of the reform would be introduced later.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/pxby3s>

HISTORY EDUCATION

University of Western Sydney and TVS make history come to life with launch of new TV quiz show, 'Histrionics'

UWS Media Release, 18/05/2009

'Histrionics' is a seven-part TV series that's been created by the University of Western Sydney's School of Communication Arts together with the NSW History Teachers' Association, as a way of engaging young people and enlivening the study of history by making it fun and interactive.

The program will premiere on TVS, Sydney's own free-to-air Community Television channel, on Thursday 21 May at 7:00pm.

'Histrionics' is set to be a valuable education tool, with the program's quiz questions based on the NSW History syllabus. The questions were developed in collaboration with the NSW History Teachers' Association.

UWS Vice-Chancellor, Professor Janice Reid, says the University is very proud to be supporting the importance of history education with 'Histrionics'.

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/pmvqry>

For more information about 'Histrionics' visit: <http://www.histrionics.com.au>

MATHEMATICS EDUCATION

In Search of a Better Teaching Formula: Educators Are Challenging the Idea That Numerical Ability Must Come Naturally

Michael Chandler, Washington Post, 16 May 2009

To counter the notion that mathematics ability is inscribed in DNA, school officials and corporate executives are waging a public relations campaign for the hearts and minds of the average math student.

Their goal is to immerse more middle school students in algebra and toughen high school math requirements so graduates can compete for increasingly technical jobs. Their message: Advanced math is not only for rocket scientists.

"We are trying to find more and more ways to get the youth of America engaged," said William H. Swanson, chief executive of Raytheon. The Massachusetts-based defense contractor gives out math and science scholarships and is designing a math-oriented attraction at Disney World's Epcot.

It also has brought professional football players to school rallies to talk about math in sports, tackling a stereotype that math is for nerds.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/oc2ec8>

AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

ACT: Minister stands by cap on expert teacher numbers

ABC News, May 24, 2009

The ACT Education Minister has defended his plan to place a cap on the number of expert teachers created under a new enterprise agreement.

The Minister says as part of a new merit-based remuneration system, expert teachers will receive a six-figure salary.

The Education Union says a limit is heavy-handed and should not be necessary.

The Opposition's education spokesman, Steve Doszpot, says the Government's plan is short on detail: it is not clear where the additional funding to pay new expert teachers is to come from.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/o9uqbx>

NSW: Government links spelling bee to improved literacy

ABC News, May 21, 2009

The State Government says its annual school spelling bee is paying off in improved literacy results for students.

Premier Nathan Rees launched this year's search for the state's best young speller with some hard-learned advice.

"No room for slips, no room for mistakes, and only the best will survive," he said.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/o88bu7>

QLD: Government had early warning on school test failures

Tanya Chilcott, Courier Mail, May 21, 2009

ALARMING figures show the Queensland Government knew exactly how badly state school students were performing in reading and numeracy at least a year before it commissioned an expert to lift results.

It comes as state school teachers plan further potential industrial action across Queensland following this week's strike over teachers' pay.

Figures compiled by The Courier-Mail from more than 1300 Queensland schools show about 285 state schools - nearly a third which published their Year 3, 5 and 7 2007 numeracy and literacy results - had 30 per cent or more of their Year 7 students fail to reach the numeracy national benchmark.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/praty8>

QLD: Bush education centre set to open at last

ABC News, 21/05/2009

Despite a string of funding setbacks, an RM Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre in south-east Queensland could be up and running by the end of the year.

The centre, in the Burnett town of Eidsvold, has been in the pipeline for eight years.

The late R M Williams was an iconic bushman, and his grand-daughter Kylie Schooley says the proposed centre will offer all sorts of education.

"We're certainly targeting the North Burnett region, adults and students, to learn contemporary and traditional bushcraft," she says.

"And we've also got a link with Education Queensland so hopefully will be able to extend literacy and numeracy."

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/q4hq9z>

SA: Truants tell schools where to go

Elissa Doherty, Sunday Mail, May 16

STUDENTS say wagging school is easy, despite a raft of modern-day measures to combat

truancy. New tactics such as text messaging to mobile phones of parents have failed to make a dent in the overall rate of unexplained absenteeism, figures show.

Students congregating in malls, fast-food restaurants and outside cinemas across the city this week told the Sunday Mail they regularly ditched school but had no fear of getting caught. And if they are, the threat of detention or their parents being contacted does little to deter them.

Education Department figures show nearly 5000 of the state's 165,300 public school students recorded unexplained absences in Term 2 last year - a figure which has changed little since 2005.

The unauthorised-absentee rate includes students who are absent for genuine reasons but for whom the school never receives a parental explanation.

The Australian Education Union said the truancy rate would drop if teachers were given more support to address the problem. SA branch president Coreena Haythorpe said "attendance improvement plans" required of schools by the Government were cumbersome and took hours of work.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/phous8>

TAS: Premier portrait prize panned

Michael Stedman, Mercury, May 21 2009

Students have been asked to produce portraits of the Premier for a competition to mark Public Education Day today. Liberal education spokeswoman Sue Napier said it smacked of former Chinese dictator Chairman Mao and North Korean President Kim Jong-il.

"Communist bloc countries have a rich history of school competitions celebrating their glorious leaders," Ms Napier said. "What public education in this state needs is leadership, a comprehensive vision and some forward-planning, not an Education Minister who sees it as a way to promote his own flourishing self-opinion."

The Australian Education Union, however, launched back at the Liberals -- accusing them of hijacking public education celebrations to mount cheap political attacks.

Tasmanian president Leanne Wright said the competition was organised by the union and representatives of the Education Department, with no involvement from Mr Bartlett.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/puqaav>

TAS: Doomed schools given \$1 million federal funding

Helen Kempton, Mercury, May 25, 2009

FOUR Tasmanian schools earmarked for closure have received more than \$1 million from the Federal Government.

Tasmania's Education Department says the money will be spent on the facilities that will replace them, not on obsolete buildings. Tasmanian schools got \$14.7 million under round two of the Building the Education Revolution program, after netting \$35.3 million in round one.

Acton Primary, which is one of three Burnie schools that will merge at a new site, gets \$375,000 for classroom extensions and refurbishment. Claremont Primary and Roseneath Primary, which are both set to close, get \$275,000 and \$200,000 respectively to upgrade

classrooms. Kingston High, which will be rebuilt in two years, got \$200,000 for water-saving devices.

Tasmanian Education Department deputy secretary of corporate services Greg Glass said the funding would be used to build new educational facilities or refurbish existing school buildings where schools amalgamated.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/qk9hj9>

VIC: Melbourne school closes as a precaution due to swine flu cases

The Australian, May 21, 2009 (AAP)

A MELBOURNE school has been closed for the rest of the week after two of its students were diagnosed with swine flu as Health Minister Nicola Roxon says she expect the number of cases to rise in Australia.

"The situation is developing quite quickly and I suspect that later in the day there will be more cases to add to that number," Ms Roxon said. "Obviously it (closing the school) is going to be an action that is going to inconvenience a number of parents," Ms Roxon told ABC Radio.

"It is one of the steps that are being taken to try to contain it, to try to stop it becoming a disease that is widespread."

Three boys from one family tested positive to the H1N1 virus on Wednesday, a week after they returned from a family holiday in Los Angeles.

Health authorities rushed to stop the virus spreading, quarantining the family and 26 classmates at Clifton Hill Primary school, where two of the boys are pupils.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/q8wahr>

VIC: Teachers to go on performance pay

Farrah Tomazin, The Age, May 21, 2009

TEACHERS and schools in Victoria are set to get financial bonuses for lifting students' results, as the State Government moves to bring performance-based pay into the education system before the next election.

In a move that could put the Government on a collision course with teachers, Victoria is expected to pilot a new merit-based pay scheme next year as part of a state-wide push to reward high-performing staff and attract more people into the classroom.

Under the proposed model, it is believed that individual teachers - and in some cases, entire schools - could be eligible for bonuses if student performance has been boosted across a range of benchmarks, such as literacy and numeracy results, attendance rates and student wellbeing.

But it is expected teachers would also have to demonstrate they have "added value" to their students - regardless of the child's initial level of achievement, or what kind of school they come from - as well as share their skills and knowledge with their peers.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/qwa5o3>

WA: \$300m funding boost for WA schools in State Budget

Debbie Guest, The Australian, May 15, 2009

THE Barnett Government will build or upgrade 14 schools over the next six years to help create the biggest school improvement program in the state's history.

The program will cost the state Government \$300 million and combined with \$566 million in commonwealth funding will see more than 30 schools benefit.

Education Minister Liz Constable said 15 high schools and 17 primary schools would be part of the program, which was expected to be completed in 2015.

"These are decisions we are making today to ensure the future of WA and generations of students," Dr Constable said.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/qv4svc>

WA: Subsidies to students abandoned in Budget

Paul Lampathakis, Perth Now, May 21, 2009

A BROKEN Liberal election promise will cost WA families allowances and subsidies which help them pay for school fees and books.

Opposition leader Eric Ripper said today that the \$200 "It Pays to Learn" allowance for parents with 16 and 17-year-old children at school had been cut in last week's Budget.

Mr. Ripper said a \$100 per student subsidy, paid to every public secondary school to help families with compulsory and voluntary school fees, had also been slashed.

A \$400 allowance for 16 and 17-year-old students in training had also been cut. The cuts - which are estimated to affect more than 30,000 families - will be in force from next year.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/pm8zha>

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Education Week

Education Week is celebrated at different times of the year in each state and territory.

Here are links to information about one recent, one current and one upcoming Education Week.

VIC: 17-23 May: <http://tinyurl.com/pirajw>

NSW: 24-31 May: <http://tinyurl.com/quwyta>

QLD: 1-6 June: <http://tinyurl.com/od99a3>

REMINDERS

March-May - Teaching Australia Workshops and Masterclasses - locations around Australia - <http://tinyurl.com/peahdl>

31 May - Australian Rural Education Awards nominations close - <http://tinyurl.com/p8xktz>

5 June - Education, Policy and Research Forum - Melbourne, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/ob36xs>

15-16 June - Communities in Control Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/r8np4d>

19 June - Nominations close for Australian Awards for Teaching Excellence - <http://tinyurl.com/peahdl>

4-7 July - Contasta Science Education Conference - Launceston, TAS - <http://tinyurl.com/r4yluh>

5-8 July - World Conference on Higher Education - Paris, France - <http://tinyurl.com/p3624s>

5-10 July - Youth ANZAAS 2009 - Melbourne, Victoria - <http://tinyurl.com/oroyk4>

8-10 July - SPERA National Conference - Flinders University, SA - <http://tinyurl.com/qtjfk>

9 July - Registration closes for Environmental Song for Australia Contest - <http://tinyurl.com/pp4yjq>

13-16 July - Conference of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers - Fremantle, WA - <http://tinyurl.com/gqj9f>

31 July - Nominations close for ASG Inspirational Teacher Awards - <http://tinyurl.com/ojih3z>

31 July-1 August - NSW Federation of Parents' & Citizens' Associations Annual Conference - Penrith, NSW - <http://tinyurl.com/ofzcvw>

6-7 August - Professional Development Network School Leaders' Conference - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://tinyurl.com/qrfnoh>

13-14 August - Isolated Children's Parents' Assoc. of Australia Federal Conference - Longreach, QLD - <http://tinyurl.com/pdnxcr>

2-4 September - ARACY Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/qljgz>

26-28 September - ACEL International Conference - Darwin, NT - <http://tinyurl.com/pgf6cq>

2-4 October - Australian Curriculum Studies Association Biennial Conference - Canberra, ACT - <http://tinyurl.com/pcslmo>

12-13 October - ACSSO National Conference - Hobart, Tasmania - <http://tinyurl.com/q8nj13>



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ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://www.acsso.org.au/aed.htm> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup.htm> (monthly)
- Values Education : <http://www.valuesineducation.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- Languages Education : <http://www.languageseducation.com/news.htm> (monthly)
- Ensemble - Music Education : <http://www.ensemble.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- Family School Partners : http://www.familyschool.org.au/?page_id=6 (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://www.acsso.org.au/pev.htm> (quarterly)

Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at letters@acsso.org.au. Details of products, services, events, resources or points of view are provided for information only; publication does not imply endorsement or recommendation. No warranty is provided nor liability accepted by ACSSO, its members or employees.

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