



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 23, 30 June 2009

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SCIENCE EDUCATION

It's Time to Do School Differently – refocusing our science and maths learning

Richard W Riley, Huffington Post (US) 2 June 2009

As U.S. Secretary of Education, I often spoke of the importance of a quality math and science education to every student's learning experience. In those days, we talked about the need for every student to compete and succeed in the new information-based society.

Now, the stakes are even higher. Indeed, our future as a nation depends on our commitment to ensuring that every student -- not just the select few -- achieves far higher levels of math and science learning.

We've learned in this economic crisis that the old ways of doing business just don't work anymore. We know we must do banking differently; we must approach the business of making cars differently; we must see our place in the global community differently; and we must begin a renewed effort aimed at innovative reform of the education system for our students and for the future economic prosperity of this nation.

In short, it's time to "do school differently."

We must make certain that every man, woman, and child in the United States has the science, technology, engineering, and math skills to allow them to contribute to and gain from the country's future productivity, and to understand policy choices, and participate in building a sustainable future. These are skills essential to all, regardless of their chosen professional path.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/kqh88t>

Richard W Riley is a former US Secretary of Education

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A Moment of Urgency and Opportunity

Introduction to Report "The Opportunity Equation: Transforming Mathematics and Science Education for Citizenship and the Global Economy", Carnegie Institute, 10 June 2009

The United States must mobilize for excellence in mathematics and science education so that all students — not just a select few, or those fortunate enough to attend certain schools — achieve much higher levels of math and science learning.

Over the coming decades, today's young people will depend on the skills and knowledge developed from learning math and science to analyze problems, imagine solutions, and bring productive new ideas into being.

The nation's capacity to innovate for economic growth and the ability of American workers to thrive in the global economy depend on a broad foundation of math and science learning, as do our hopes for preserving a vibrant democracy and the social contract with young people that lies at the heart of the American dream: Invest in yourself, work hard and learn, and you will have opportunities for rewarding work and meaningful choices about your future.

What kind of schools and systems of education does America need to transform mathematics and science education and deliver it equitably and with excellence to all students?

The Commission believes that the magnitude of the challenge demands transformative change in classrooms, schools, and education systems.

Read entire Introduction at: <http://tinyurl.com/n87eag>

Read the Executive Summary and access the full report at: <http://tinyurl.com/lsehrr>

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2009 Australia Museum Eureka Prizes – the People's Choice Award

You are invited to vote in the 2009 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes People's Choice Award – the only Eureka Prize where you decide who will win.

We have selected six real life Australian scientists for you to choose between. Who will win? Have your say!

Your school would by now have received a poster promoting this program for use in the lab. If you require more please email us at <mailto:eureka@ausmus.gov.au>

How can you take part and get the most from this program?

- Include the People's Choice Award in your lesson plan from 9 July to 16 August;
- Watch the finalists profiled on ABC's Catalyst on 9 July (these profiles will also be available on our website);
- Read more about the finalists work online, you can even ask them a question;
- VOTE for your favourite online between 9 July and midnight AEST 16 August

Go to <http://tinyurl.com/lzpdna> for further information

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DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Technology lesson one: First teach the teachers

Nicolas Perpitch, the Australian, June 25, 2009

LEADING technology academics have warned that the rollout of communication infrastructure in the education revolution will be wasted if teachers do not know how to use it.

Schools across the country have received information and communication technology cables and infrastructure, new computers and IT room upgrades under the national school pride component of the Rudd government's \$14.7 billion Building the Education Revolution. Of the 81 schools receiving cabling for internet and internal IT networks, 60 are in regional or remote areas.

Murdoch University's Cal Durrant, who researches how information technology is applied to teaching, said anything that provided fast and reliable access to the internet for schools was worthwhile.

But he said it was important to ensure geographical isolation was not an impediment to the education of children. This needed to be accompanied by extra professional development programs for teachers on how to use the technology.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/mlqep2>

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Heading into the cloud: cloud computing and education

Jenny Millea, educationau.edu.au, 23 June 2009

Cloud computing is another buzz word spilling into the education sector and IT press.

What does it mean for a teacher, for education, for a school?

In simple terms cloud computing enables you to access software applications, hardware, data and computer processing power on the web, rather than loading software onto your own computer or school server. That is, using the 'cloud' means using the internet as your own personal computer, processor and storage environment, accessing it with any internet-capable device, from any physical location 24/7/365.

It's always on, always available, accessible from anywhere.

The term 'cloud computing' is synonymous with the terms 'Software as a service' (SaaS), a hosted service, or utility computing. And for anyone who wants to work from multiple locations – such as different campuses, home, conferences, and while travelling – cloud computing makes perfect sense.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ljw5pk>

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Victorian Schools Share in \$200,000 Technology Innovation Boost

Acting Victorian Education Minister Maxine Morand, 18 June 2009

Victorian school students will be even better equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st Century as 32 schools across the state develop innovative learning projects thanks to a new \$200,000 Brumby Labor Government technology grant.

Acting Education Minister Maxine Morand today congratulated the 32 government schools which received \$6000 each from the 2009 Innovating with Technology program.

"The Brumby Labor Government knows how important information and communication technology (ICT) skills are in equipping 21st century students with the skills they need to flourish in a knowledge-rich high-tech world," Ms Morand said.

"The \$200,000 Innovating with Technology grant is one of many initiatives the Brumby Labor Government has committed to, in improving ICT at Victorian Government schools and ensuring our students remain at the forefront of learning."

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/lfl7gg>

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BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Historic modernisation program for Australian Secondary Schools

The Hon Julia Gillard, Minister for Education, 30 June 2009

The Australian Government today announced funding of \$810 million to bring Australian secondary schools into the 21st century.

A total of 537 science laboratories and language learning centres will be built or refurbished under the first stage of the Science and Language Centres for the 21st Century Secondary Schools (SLC) element of the Building the Education Revolution (BER).

This important program will deliver much-needed funding to secondary schools that have demonstrated through a competitive process their school's disadvantage and need.

This is part of the Rudd Government's nation building for recovery plan to help drive Australia out of the global recession – building the infrastructure we need for tomorrow while supporting jobs and businesses today.

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/ln77tn>

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Are we just replicating outmoded "template" designs in rush to rebuild?

Rick Wallace, the Australian, June 23, 2009

THE global head of architecture giant Woods Bagot's educational division has called for a move away from outdated school design templates and towards modern, collaborative learning classrooms, while warning that the Rudd government's schools rebuild is being rushed.

Mark Kelly has told The Australian the government should strive to create more spacious and innovative learning "studios" instead of template-based modules under its \$14 billion schools rebuilding program. "We are believers that the quality of the built environment can impact on the performance of students. There's a lot of evidence from the UK and the US on that."

He said the template classrooms were based on the traditional top-down teaching system, with the teacher lecturing to a seated class, whereas more innovative designs featured circular tables or more flexible spatial arrangements that allowed children to interact and learn by participation. Mr. Kelly acknowledged that such designs required more space per pupil, but said research proved they gave children a better education.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/n4ozmj>

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Teachers call for review of Building the Education Revolution program

Angelo Gavrielatos, Federal President, AEU, 18 June 2009

The Australian Education Union today called for a transparent review of the implementation of the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program to examine issues that have arisen with the first rounds of implementation.

AEU Federal President, Angelo Gavrielatos said the review should investigate:

- whether state/territory governments are maintaining their own effort in school maintenance and capital and the extent to which they are charging administration costs;
- the extent to which projects will meet requirements that they will be available for community use;
- whether projects are informed by principles of environmental sustainability; and
- if costs are being inflated.

"It is about ensuring that, in the interests of our students and school communities, we realise the full potential of this significant investment in school infrastructure and the full economic stimulus benefit," Mr Gavrielatos said.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/l7mngl>

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Language laboratory building fund ineffective without skilled teachers

Nicolas Perpetch, the Australian, June 27, 2009

Australian Council of State School Organisations' president Steve Carter said the centres would be of great benefit as long as past failures to promote languages were turned around.

"There's not much point in putting money into infrastructure if it's not accompanied by the human resources to actually maximise those centres," Mr. Carter said. "The two of them need to go hand in hand. So we would look forward to an additional resourcing into the training of specialist language teachers."

Australian Secondary Principals Association president Andrew Blair said there were serious concerns over teacher supply, and demand, for Asian languages in Australia.

"I'm referring to creating the demand within the community for the teaching of Asian languages and the teaching of cultural competence within the community," Mr. Blair said.

Other education advocates said the language centres should be interactive classrooms, where students could engage via the internet with native speakers in other countries, rather than language rooms of the past.

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

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EDUCATION, CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

'Education systems too narrow': Sir Ken Robinson

ABC 7.30 Report transcript, 16 June 2009

Sir Ken Robinson, a leading thinker on education, creativity and innovation, who has advised various governments and major global corporations says that most education systems around the world including Australia's, are still modelled on the needs of the industrial age, were already narrow and are getting narrower.

KERRY O'BRIEN, PRESENTER: Ken Robinson, you tell the stories of a number of famous people whose traditional education failed to help them identify their real talents before they went on to brilliant careers, Paul McCartney, for instance: you say he went through his entire education without anyone noticing he had any musical talent at all. Are you saying that's a common story?

KEN ROBINSON: Yes. I mean, I don't mean to say that you have to have failed at school before you can be a success, but an awful lot of people who did well after school didn't do well in school.

Paul McCartney went to school in Liverpool and, as you say, he went through the whole of his education there and nobody thought he had any musical talent. One of the other people in the same music group - music class - was George Harrison, the lead guitarist of The Beatles, and he went through school as well and nobody noticed had any talent.

So I was saying this recently that this one teacher in Liverpool in the '50s had half The Beatles in his class and he missed it. And the point about this is that, you know, talent is often buried deep; it's not lying around on the surface, but our education systems at the moment are still very focused on a certain type of ability, and the result is very many brilliant people are marginalised by the whole process.

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

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COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

School league tables must be stopped

John Kaye MP, Sydney Morning Herald, 30 June 2009

The federal Education Minister, Julia Gillard, does not want school league tables. Nor does her state colleague, Verity Firth. The data protocols they signed together commits all Australian governments to minimise the risk that "third parties may seek to produce" them.

The former NSW director-general of education Ken Boston - responsible for setting them up in Britain - says "the primary school curriculum has become a husk". Brian Caldwell, former dean of education at Melbourne University, departed from the measured and sober language of academia to urge "agitation on an epic scale" against them.

On the best advice the Greens successfully sought to stop production of simplistic school league tables in NSW.

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

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NSW legislated ban on schools' statistics slammed

Justine Ferrari & Joe Kelly, the Australian, June 29, 2009

TEACHERS' unions and school principals will be able to line their pockets under new big brother laws in NSW banning the publication of statistics ranking the state's schools, which have been condemned by legal experts and civil libertarians.

And in an embarrassing development for NSW Opposition Leader Barry O'Farrell, who supports the ban, the new laws were yesterday denounced as inconsistent with a free society by former federal Liberal leader Brendan Nelson.

The Greens and the Coalition joined forces in the upper house last week to ban the publication of "league tables", backed by fines of up to \$5000 for individuals and \$55,000 for organisations such as newspapers.

The Australian has learned that, under existing NSW laws allowing private prosecutions, the proceeds of any fine imposed for compiling and publishing comparisons would be shared by the person or organisation that brought the court action.

Dr Nelson, who pioneered the release of school information as federal education minister between 2001 and 2006, was "flabbergasted" by the Coalition's support for the amendment. "I'm not an advocate of government-constructed league tables, but if somebody wants to construct a league table on the basis of publicly available information, they should be able to do so," he told The Australian. "The last time I looked this was a free society."

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

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School league table defenders skate on thin ice

John Kaye MP, Media release: 29 June 2009

Criticisms of the Greens' anti-league-tables amendment fail to acknowledge the damage that would have been done by inaccurate comparisons of schools, according to Greens NSW MP John Kaye.

"NSW Education Minister Verity Firth regularly reiterates her federal colleague Julia Gillard's opposition to simplistic league tables. The data protocol she signed commits all Australian governments to 'put in place strategies to manage the risk that third parties may seek to

produce [simplistic league] tables or rankings.' That is exactly what the Greens amendment did".

"For the past 12 years successive NSW Labor government maintained a similar ban on simplistic school comparisons. The Rees government is now happy to allow simplistic comparisons of schools to hollow out the curriculum, stigmatise excellent schools that serve disadvantaged communities and mislead parents."

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/naq5zs>

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National league tables make for testing times

Jon Berry, Newcastle Herald 26 Jun 2009

IT's worth stating the obvious from the outset. I don't know of any teacher or any school opposed to testing. We all need to know what young people have understood and we all need to recognise how we can modify and adjust our practice accordingly.

But exposing children to national testing and putting their results into public league tables has nothing to do with sensible assessment of their progress.

Watching what is happening in Australia is like watching the re-run of a slasher movie only this time it's real life and the disaster affects real people and real schools.

When testing and league tables were introduced in England in the early '90s, a campaign by teachers, supported by parent groups, managed to stem the initial tide.

Even at that early stage, teachers could see that a high-stakes testing regime was certain to impact upon what happened in classrooms with an inevitable drive towards "teaching to the test" eventually taking place.

Teachers were ready to strike, not about pay and conditions, but about the damage the government was doing to children. The Conservative government of the time and, shamefully, its New Labour successor, was determined to see its education project through. Both administrations saw the implementation of market forces as the cure for all our schools' ills.

Central to this approach was the idea that schools needed to be ranked against each other so that parents could make "informed" choices about where to send their children.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/lzln7k>

Jon Berry is a senior lecturer in education at the University of Hertfordshire in the UK

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COMPARING TEACHER PERFORMANCE

Teacher rating website stays online

From correspondents in Berlin, Reuters, June 24, 2009

A popular website that lets students rate their teachers will remain online after a court ruled against a complaint.

Germany's federal court of justice rejected the case of a woman who argued her rights had been infringed by pupils who gave her bad grades.

It found that the rights of the woman, a teacher of German and religion, had not been compromised by the ratings and that pupils had a right to offer an opinion as long as they did not hinder her professionally.

"The opinions expressed are neither abusive nor insulting," the court said in a statement. "The plaintiff did not show that she had been harmed in any specific way."

The court said collection, storage, and transmission of ratings by online portal spickmich.de was therefore permissible without the assent of the plaintiff.

The website allows students to award teachers marks on a scale from one (very good) to six (unsatisfactory), the same scale on which German pupils are graded.

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

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INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Education the key to keep indigenous kids out of jail

Stephen Lunn, the Australian, June 25, 2009

EACH indigenous child should be given their own education fund to help keep them in school and avoid the path to prison.

Education - along with greater diversion of indigenous offenders with drug and alcohol problems from the justice system into the health system - are the keys to stemming the rising tide of Aboriginal incarceration in Australia, a new report says.

The Australian National Council on Drugs report on indigenous incarceration, "Bridges and Barriers", will be launched in Canberra today by Health Minister Nicola Roxon.

Prepared by the council's National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee, it notes the proportion of Aborigines in detention has steadily grown since the 1991 report of the royal commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, despite efforts to cut it.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/lr87xn>

Access the report at: <http://tinyurl.com/nujyx5>

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SAFETY

Crisis call for campus security

Guy Healy, The Australian, June 24, 2009

A US-style mandatory campus crime reporting regime is needed to overcome a deep-seated avoidance of debate about student safety, an expert has warned.

As universities and private colleges sought to deflect responsibility for the crisis, Monash University's Chris Nyland called on the Senate inquiry into the treatment of overseas students to consider whether the US Clery Act should be introduced in Australia.

Professor Nyland, who has been co-researching a book on international student security for five years, said Universities Australia's recent 10-point plan to address the crisis, while

welcome, was likely to be insufficient.

As well as stepping up its work with police, diplomats and others under the plan, UA promised to lobby for stronger accreditation and quality assurance of all providers under a new review of the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.

But Professor Nyland said that under reputation-management practices, Australian universities and colleges, like their overseas counterparts, were "extremely reluctant" to admit to problems that may turn customers away.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/mt7pc7>

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Financial safety net urged for international students to reduce risks

Andrew Trounson & Luke Slattery, The Australian, June 24, 2009

GOVERNMENT and higher education providers should set aside money as a financial safety net for international students, according to a joint study by researchers at Monash and Melbourne universities, whose report comes amid fresh indications that many find themselves in financial trouble.

The paper also calls on the government to review the specified minimum income students need to support themselves while studying. Too many students need to work long hours. Working long hours and a reliance on public transport are believed to be factors in making students vulnerable to attacks of the kind that have attracted so much publicity.

But there are concerns that any move to raise the income requirements put on candidates risks making Australia less attractive to foreign students.

"The direct way (to address safety) is to put more police and transport officials on," said Simon Marginson, chairman of higher education at Melbourne University and one of the authors of the study Australian University International Student Finances.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/mkp-phd>

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RESEARCH

OECD Report: Learning helps keep a check on size of our figures

Siobhain Ryan, the Australian, June 23, 2009

EDUCATION not only expands the mind but shrinks the waistline, an OECD working paper has found. An analysis of health and education data in Australia, Canada, England and South Korea has found a person's chance of becoming obese decreases as their years of education increase, suggesting that school teaches more than just reading, writing and arithmetic.

Better educated people seem to find it easier to access and understand health-related information, assess lifestyle risks, and have the self-control to act on those assessments, the paper says.

"If changes in education could be expected to influence health-related behaviours and obesity rates in a population, this might strengthen the case for educational policies aimed, for instance, at increasing compulsory schooling age or increasing enrolment in higher education," it notes.

Obesity rates have increased sharply in recent decades in all industrialised countries, with more than one billion adults worldwide believed to be overweight and at least 300 million of those clinically obese.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/l3h6zd>

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AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

ACT: Minister Andrew Barr defends primary schools funding regime

ABC News, Jun 29, 2009

The ACT Government is resisting pressure to let primary schools spend new Federal Government funds at their own discretion. The Commonwealth announced it would boost funding for primary schools in January.

Primary Principals Association president Norm Hart says it was to fix a funding anomaly and the ACT Government should hand the money to individual primary schools instead of absorbing it into its total education budget.

"It was the advocacy of principals that actually got this anomaly corrected, these are the spoils of victory and we'd like to share them," he said.

ACT Education Minister Andrew Barr says all the money will be put into primary schools but it will be spent in the normal way.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/lmsfz6>

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NSW: NSW expects free laptops will lift student engagement & attendance

Bruce McDougall, Daily Telegraph, June 25, 2009

STUDENT absenteeism is to plummet in high schools as wayward pupils are lured back to class by free laptops.

The first batch of laptops was delivered to teachers yesterday and will be rolled out to thousands of students across the state from next term. Principals believe laptops will help teachers boost the performance of slow learners and lift attendance.

Teachers said the computers - part of the Rudd Government's Education Revolution - were one of the biggest changes in teaching in years.

Principal Lee Wright said yesterday that students "can even sit outside the classroom at lunchtime and use these laptops because of the wireless facility. The machines are helping to engage the students in their learning."

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/l4hxqa>

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NSW: NSW Government denies plans to axe teaching jobs

Stephanie Gardiner & Chi Tranter, Brisbane Times 21 June 2009 (AAP)

The NSW government says it does not plan to axe special education teachers, and is considering expanding support programs for students with extra needs.

A memo obtained by News Ltd says the Education Department will force nearly 2,000 classroom teachers out of teaching roles to become school "coordinators". Teaching would not be part of their new roles and would instead help parents contact support agencies and provide advice and mentoring to teachers.

Of the 1,830 reclassified positions, 1,200 were teachers who supported children with learning difficulties, the report said.

The state opposition labelled such a move as "crazy" while the NSW Teachers Federation described it as a "serious attack" on teacher support for students.

But Education Minister Verity Firth said there were no plans to axe the positions. "Teachers and parents can be certain, we will not be cutting special education teachers," she said.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/nvvg4r>

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QLD: Queensland's would-be teachers will be put to the test

Brisbane Times, June 29, 2009

Aspiring teachers will have to pass literacy, numeracy and science tests before they can be registered in Queensland from 2011, State Cabinet has decided today.

A call for tests was one of five recommendations from education researcher Professor Geoff Masters' May 2009 report to lift literacy and numeracy standards in Queensland schools.

A series of tests will be trialled in 2010 and the best testing option put in place in 2011. The first Queensland teachers to undergo the tests will be employed from 2012.

The Premier said no decision had been made about the type of testing that student teachers would have to complete.

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

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SA: Tight super-school deadline for Spencer Gulf cities

Lauren Novak, Advertiser, June 29, 2009

PARENTS in Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie are being asked to decide by today if they will accept the merger of 44 schools into nine new super schools. They have been asked to approve three super schools in each city. If most parents approve the moves they would be considered by the State Government. Parents would be polled again on which individual

schools would be closed.

Parents have told The Advertiser they first were shown the proposals in March or April.

They feel pressured by the state Education Department and developers to meet the deadline so they can pool money on offer in the third round of the Federal Government's Building the Education Revolution.

"We were told we need to hurry up and make a decision before June 30," a parent and a Port Pirie primary school council member said. "We were under the impression if we didn't we were going to lose all sorts of funding."

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/kr6x4l>

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SA: School day changes urged for secondary students

ABC News, Jun 26, 2009

The traditional class times for South Australian secondary may soon be overhauled.

The Secondary Principals Association say retention rates could be improved by abandoning the 8.30am to 3.30pm regime.

The association's Peter Mader says it would make sense for schools to introduce the change by 2011, when the new certificate of education will focus more on vocational education.

"There's a greater percentage of our students who are in part-time employment and one of the big changes to the new secondary curriculum is that students will be able count considerably more of their outside of school learning, which includes part-time work and a range of vocational educational training courses," he said.

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/lr3tdh>

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SA: Greens seek more time for parent consultation on school mergers.

Mark Parnell MLC: Media Release, 29 June 2009

The Government should give 44 schools in the Upper Spencer Gulf more time to decide whether to merge into 9 new schools, says Greens MLC Mark Parnell.

The move comes as the Advertiser reports that parents are feeling pressured to meet an artificial deadline based on Federal building grant money.

"June 30 is a totally artificial deadline. The Government must not use it to force schools to make crucial decisions before they are ready," he said. "I've written to the Minister to ask her to give school communities in Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Augusta more time, and reassure them that building grant funds will not be at risk. Otherwise, forced decisions made under pressure before a community is ready will only lead to resentment and anger.

"Our public schools work best with the community and parents in full support".

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/kqjs89>

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TAS: Parents claim federal stimulus funds used to rush local schools mergers

Matthew Denholm, the Australian, June 22, 2009

FEDERAL economic stimulus funds have been used to pressure Tasmanian school communities to "rush" into school mergers and closures, a parents' organisation says. And Building the Education Revolution rules have been bent to allow funds for three schools scheduled for closure to be diverted to schools yet to be built on greenfield sites.

Tasmanian State School Parents and Friends president Jenny Branch said BER funds were used to exert undue pressure on parents and schools to quickly accept a major rationalisation of schools in Hobart's north.

Ms Branch said many parents felt Premier David Bartlett had used state influence over the program to force quick agreement on the deal. She said communities were warned they would miss out on BER funds if they did not quickly accept reforms in time to meet funding deadlines.

"They didn't really have a choice -- it was a case of if you don't do this quickly, the schools will close down anyway and you'll miss out on the money," Ms Branch said.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/l33h6s>

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TAS: Schools boss earns more than highly-paid Premier

Alison Andrews, the Examiner, 23/06/2009

THE man appointed by Premier David Bartlett to design and drive Tasmania's major post-grade 10 education reforms earns more than his boss. Education Department secretary John Smyth sits on a salary of nearly \$300,000 a year - almost \$22,000 more than the Premier.

Mr Smyth easily tops a list of the eight highest-paid education bureaucrats and surpasses Mr Bartlett's earnings of \$273,143, even though Mr Bartlett is one of Australia's highest paid premiers.

Education deputy secretary Greg Glass and strategic planning general manager Jenny Gale are the next highest department wage earners, both on an annual wage of between \$183,000 and \$219,000.

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

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VIC: Bronwyn Pike refuses to name schools earmarked for closure

Nick Higginbottom, Herald Sun, June 23, 2009

Opposition Education spokesman Martin Dixon believes a secret hit list contains up to 20 Victorian schools and today called on the Brumby Government to reveal which ones would be wiped out.

Mr. Dixon said the timing of the Brumby Government's hit list coinciding with the Rudd Government's education funding was not surprising.

"So far this year I'm aware of about a dozen schools that have been forced to merge, the Commonwealth funding has brought that to a head," he said. "I'm aware there are at least

another half dozen schools on the government's hit list.

"They (government) admit there are other schools they're going to close down, they should come clean with that list."

Mr. Dixon slammed the Brumby Government for not making its hit list public and said parents, students and teachers deserved to know if they're school was in the firing line.

"The government has announced today there are a few schools they're going to close down," he said.

Ms. Pike told Parliament in March the Brumby Government did not close schools or force them to merge.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/nz9ejr>

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WA: Public high schools 'should include Year 7'

ABC News, Jun 22, 2009

The WA Secondary Schools Executives Association is warning public school students could be disadvantaged unless Year 7 is incorporated into high school.

The association says the move would fill unused classrooms and retain teachers next year when the so-called "half-cohort" of students enters high school.

Only half the usual number of Year 8 students enrolls in high school next year because of changes to the enrolment age in 2003.

The association's president, Rob Nairn, denies schools will need millions of dollars to fund new middle school infrastructure to house the Year 7 students.

"Many of our schools have the capacity and the infrastructure already in place that will enable them to take them," he said.

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

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WA: Perth schools covet \$160m held as reserves and provisions

Bethany Hiatt, West Australian, 13th June 2009

State schools were found to have over \$160 million in accounts at the end of last year, prompting WA's main parents' group to call for funds to be redistributed to needy schools.

Among the top 10 on the rich list were western suburbs schools Shenton College, Perth Modern and Churchlands Senior High Schools.

The list compiled by the Department of Education and Training reveals that 13 schools had more than \$1 million in their bank account at the end of the year.

But the poorest schools between them had less than \$150,000 for equipment, teaching resources and maintenance. They included country primary schools in Goomalling, Dardanup and Vasse.

WA Council of State School Organisations president Rob Fry said the money should be re-allocated to poorer schools if rich schools could not justify why they had not spent it. "It makes it hard to argue that parents in these schools should have to fork out anything in their voluntary fees," he said. "The department needs to seriously look at allocating money according to need."

"If schools have got huge reserves, it's questionable as to where the need is," he said. "The government allocation is on an annual basis and focuses on the students of that period."

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/nzd2vn>

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CONFERENCES & EVENTS: NEW POSTINGS

Parents Victoria Annual State Conference 2009

"If you care – Be Aware"

18-19 August 2009, Melbourne, Victoria

Full details published early Term 3 at <http://tinyurl.com/mw5faq>

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Western Australian Council of State School Organisations

Annual State Conference 2009

29-30 August, Burswood Entertainment Complex, WA

Full details shortly at <http://tinyurl.com/nydplr>

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Family Relationship Services Australia (FRSA) National Conference

Children and Families: Reducing Risk, Building Resilience

24-26 November, Sydney

This year the conference theme 'Children and Families: Reducing Risk, Building Resilience' builds on the work being done across child protection, family support and family law sectors to strengthen the identification of families at risk and develop effective multi-disciplinary responses that reduce risk and build resilience.

The conference will attract delegates from family and children's services, family courts and legal practitioners, government agencies, policy makers, academics and experts in children, parenting, family and relationship practice. Papers and interactive workshop proposals are invited in response to the following themes:

- Risk assessment and family safety
- Strengthening families to prevent violence, abuse and neglect
- Enhancing child wellbeing and resilience
- Building resilient family relationships
- Examples of cross sector collaboration and service integration
- Measuring service outcomes in family support

- Engaging children and young people in decisions that affect them

Closing date for proposals: 10 July

Registrations will open soon, for updates please visit <http://tinyurl.com/lz433t>

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REMINDERS

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, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/oroyk4>

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

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/qgjf9f>

14-15 July - Educational Leadership and Coaching Conference - Sydney, NSW - <http://tinyurl.com/kk3ree>

31 July - Nominations close for NEiTA 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>

22 August - Tasmanian Parents & Friends Association State Annual Conference - <http://tinyurl.com/lzqrpn>

31 August-6 September - Reach for the Stars - <http://tinyurl.com/l3zh3e>

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

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, TAS - <http://tinyurl.com/q8njl3>



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ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://tinyurl.com/d2o8zu> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://tinyurl.com/cswpka> (monthly)
- Values Education : <http://tinyurl.com/dls7rv> (monthly)
- Languages Education : <http://tinyurl.com/c59eda> (monthly)
- Ensemble - Music Education : <http://tinyurl.com/dedyz4> (monthly)
- Family School Partners : <http://tinyurl.com/qvleza> (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://tinyurl.com/cy7s78> (quarterly)

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