



AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

Volume 4 Number 17, 25 May 2010

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IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY

Australian Teacher evaluation is a "Fail"

Ben Jensen, Grattan Institute, 24 May 2010

"Australian teachers get less constructive evaluation of their performance than those in poor performing countries such as Bulgaria, Turkey and Brazil," Dr Ben Jensen said on the release of the second Grattan Institute Education Report entitled "What teachers want: better teacher management".

The Grattan Institute report analyses the work undertaken in the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) of which Dr Jensen was co-author. It is the only comprehensive survey of individual teachers' views that benchmarks Australia with other countries. It shows that teacher management in Australian schools, both public and private, is dysfunctional.

"Australian teachers are concerned about how they are managed and believe their evaluation process is little more than a paper shuffling exercise.

The findings are an indictment on those responsible for managing teachers in Australia:

- 91% of Australian teachers report that in their school, the most effective teachers do not receive the greatest recognition.
- Only 8% of Australian teachers report they would receive any recognition if they improve the quality of their teaching.
- 91% of Australian teachers report they will not receive any recognition for innovative teaching.
- 93% of Australian teachers report that their school principal does not take steps to address persistently underperforming teachers.

These numbers are staggering and indicate a deep malaise that is Australia wide," Dr Jensen added.

Read entire release: http://www.grattan.edu.au/news/20100524_media_release_what_teachers_want.pdf

Download the report at: http://www.grattan.edu.au/pub_page/report_what_teachers_want.html

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Teachers say best work not rewarded

Timothy McDonald and ABC News staff, 24 May 2010

A new report says the best teachers in Australian schools are not being properly recognised and the worst are not being held to account. The research from the Melbourne think-tank, the Grattan Institute, has found that poorer countries like Brazil and Bulgaria actually do a better job of consistently evaluating the performance of their teachers.

The report's author, Dr Ben Jensen, says that is not good enough.

"I think we had worried that the situation probably had a few problems but it's clear that school teachers and school principals consider the situation is very bad," he said. "Over 90 per cent of teachers are telling us that in their schools they are not recognised for quality or innovation in their teaching, and over 90 per cent of teachers are telling us that under-performance is not addressed in their schools."

He says the notion of recognition should be quite broad. "There are numerous mechanisms to reward teachers, both monetary and non-monetary rewards in the school education system."

The Australian Education Union's president, Angelo Gavrielatos, says the report's findings are a disappointing result for Australia.

"What it illustrates is that teachers feel undervalued and certainly underpaid," he said. "What we certainly need is a system that gives further recognition and further reward for teachers and the sooner governments fund it, the better we'll all be."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/24/2907219.htm?section=justin>

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Australia 'fails in teacher evaluation'

Sydney Morning Herald, May 24, 2010 (AAP)

A study ranking Australia's teacher development and evaluation practices among the worst in the world comes as no surprise to the nation's parents.

A new report from the Grattan Institute, *What Teachers Want: Better Teacher Management*, places Australia 19th out of 23 countries in teacher evaluation and development. It also says the vast majority of Australian public school teachers agreed poor-performing colleagues were not dealt with adequately by their schools and they would not be sacked for bad results.

Dianne Giblin, president of the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW, says even when problem teachers are identified there is no ready solution. "What we do have in place currently are systems that make it quite difficult to monitor and support teachers that are not quite fitting the bill," she told AAP.

Where teachers were below par, the problem was often not addressed or shifted elsewhere, she said. "If a teacher is deemed underperforming, there are very difficult processes - very long-winded processes - in place, which often results in the teacher either moving schools or just continuing to be monitored.

"What we would be calling for is a review of those systems to ensure that for parents, there is a quality teacher in front of their child every day."

Read entire article: <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/australia-fails-in-teacher-evaluation-20100524-w4uu.html>

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TOWARDS AN AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Nation's teachers have 'too much' to teach

Candice Keller, the Advertiser, 16 May 2010

TEACHERS have told the authors of a proposed new national curriculum there is too much content to be taught in a school year.

Mass complaints over the "overcrowded" new curriculum have forced the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to revise its first draft. Science and history face major cuts. ACARA chief executive Dr Peter Hill said it was a "good problem" to have and the board would look at cutting back the courses.

Specific elements to be cut from the courses have not yet been identified. The first draft of the English, maths, science and history Reception to Year 10 curriculums were released in March. Public consultation closes on May 23. The national courses are to be introduced in schools nationwide from next year with all schools expected to be teaching under the new guidelines by 2013.

Dr Hill said science and history had been singled out as problem areas of the first four core subjects presented. This will be the first time history is taught in Australia as a compulsory, stand-alone subject for students up to and including Year 10.

"History hasn't been taught as a separate subject before, so there's the issue. Science does have content that, in a way, can raise people's anxieties (because it is complex)," Dr Hill said.

Read entire article: <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/in-depth/nations-teachers-have-too-much-to-teach/story-fn3o6nna-1225867456122>

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Keep out the lobby groups, history teachers say

Justine Ferrari, the Australian, 18 May 2010

HISTORY teachers are concerned the national curriculum panders to lobby groups demanding their pet topics be included, creating a course that will force teachers to race through content and leave no time for in-depth study.

The interim response by the History Teachers' Association of Australia says the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority needs to cull content from the national history curriculum for students in Years K to 10 and withstand pressure from "numerous lobby groups" demanding their topics stay, are enhanced or are added to the final document.

"At this stage, it is vital that the process moves beyond the influence of lobby groups and commits to a rational process for reducing prescribed content," the response says. "It is not clear the current content outlines have been developed on the basis of agreement about significant knowledge."

"This echoes HTAA's well-founded concerns about what has been a relatively unsophisticated process up to this point," it says. "As a consequence, there is now considerable anxiety about ACARA's capacity to respond to consultation effectively and put in place the refinements that are so desperately needed."

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/keep-out-the-lobby-groups-history-teachers-say/story-e6frqczf-1225867926711>

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Primary school heads deliver tough verdict

Candice Keller, the Advertiser, 25 May 2010

THE nation's peak primary principals body has said the draft national curriculum is unclear and complicated.

The Australian Primary Principals Association delivered its verdict to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority yesterday, outlining major points of concern.

While APPA president Leonie Trimper said the main issue was "overcrowding" in the new curriculum - too much content to teach - APPA also had concerns about the absence of time recommendations for each of the subjects: maths, English, science and history.

"It is the view of APPA that the time required to teach the current draft program across the four subjects would already approach the total amount of realistic teaching time allocated in most primary schools," the report said.

Read entire article: <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/in-depth/primary-school-heads-deliver-tough-verdict/story-e6f7ebvu-1225870938441>

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Totalitarian education?

Rod Beecham, the Advertiser, 25 May 2010

Two years ago, Commonwealth, state and territory education ministers produced the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.

The declaration is a disturbing document, predicated without any apparent embarrassment on the assumption that what children learn must serve the interests of the state, and advocating a narrowly instrumentalist view of education.

Consequent on the Melbourne Declaration, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) was tasked with "developing a world-class national curriculum that will inspire and challenge our young people".

ACARA informs us that the "Australian Curriculum will make clear to parents, teachers and students what young people should be taught and the quality of learning that is expected of them, regardless of location."

The language of coercion is astonishingly undisguised: "World-class" (i.e. conformist), "should" (i.e. anyone who objects is morally suspect), "expected" (i.e. dissent will not be tolerated).

Readers may think I am being alarmist. I can only refer them to the recent history of tertiary education in Australia.

Read entire article: <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/in-depth/totalitarian-education/story-e6f7ebvu-1225870963939>

Rod Beecham is an independent education adviser

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Year 7s set up to fail in new maths course

Martina Simos & Candice Keller, the Advertiser, 25 May 2010

YEAR 7 students in South Australia are being set up to fail under the proposed national maths curriculum, educators warn.

Principals and teachers' associations have said the new curriculum - drafted for Reception to Year 12 in core subjects English, maths, science and history - is written to encompass Year 7 in secondary school.

However, some states - including SA - still have Year 7 as the final year of primary school, meaning some students and teachers will not be able to keep up with interstate counterparts.

Maths Association of SA president Mark Darrell said teachers who were "struggling" with upper primary or lower secondary level maths would be under pressure to teach at a higher level in the new course with little professional development training.

"We know there is a big problem on the level of mathematics that is taught in primary level - for a variety of reasons," he said. "Part of that is because primary teachers are not trained at the same level of mathematics as the secondary level teachers. This is not to say you haven't got really good teachers - it's not putting the teachers down."

He agreed teaching this more advanced course at an earlier stage might mean some students could fail under the new curriculum.

Read entire article: <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/in-depth/year-7s-set-up-to-fail-in-new-maths-course/story-e6frebvu-1225870930721>

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Historian Stuart Macintyre slams school course process

Justine Ferrari, the Australian, 25 May 2010

THE lead writer on the national history curriculum has criticised the development of the school course as an unwieldy and frustrating process, with four groups of experts making changes without consulting one another.

Eminent historian Stuart Macintyre criticised the impasse between the states and the federal government over who is going to pay for the teaching resources and training needed to implement the new curriculum, due to be introduced from 2011. While universities are training teachers who will be required to teach the national curriculum, no faculty of education has adjusted its course to take account of the changes.

The problem is most serious in history, with few education faculties outside NSW including the subject in teaching degrees, and many removing it from primary school teaching courses when it is about to become mandatory.

Professor Macintyre told The Australian the consultation process set up by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority had become derailed by "capricious" decisions made to change the course without reference to the expert advisory groups or the writers.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/historian-slams-school-course/story-e6frczfp-1225870764841>

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COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Three education sectors' financial data inconsistent

Candice Keller, the Advertiser, May 18, 2010

UPDATING the Federal Government's school performance website My School with much-awaited financial data could be delayed as authorities behind the site struggle to source the information.

The head of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, has revealed a "huge amount of work" must be done to source comparable data across the three education sectors - government, independent and Catholic.

ACARA chief executive Dr Peter Hill said even basic differences such as government schools working to financial years, versus the non-government sector being based on a calendar years, were causing problems. He said the information is due for publication on the website by the end of this year but could now be delayed.

"There is a remote possibility it won't be ready," Dr Hill said. "But we're all committed to making it happen. . . There is a lot of work to be done."

Independent auditing company Deloitte has been employed to work with state jurisdictions in making the available data consistent and comparable.

Analysing the government sector is also problematic because much of the funding is managed centrally through state education departments rather than by schools individually.

Dr Hill said ACARA was very keen to improve the information currently on the site. "We're looking at improving what's there, such as how we can better the ICSEA (through updating student address information) now that we have more time to get it right," he said.

Read entire article: <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/in-depth/three-sectors-financial-data-inconsistent/story-e6frebvu-1225868135255>

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BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Lack of control in building projects annoys school principals

Nicola Berkovic, THE Australian, 20 May 2010

Australian Primary Principals Association president Leonie Trimper told a Senate inquiry into the \$16.2 billion school stimulus program yesterday that principals had become concerned they were not getting value for money when they watched the size of the projects shrink.

...Ms Trimper said the program had brought great benefits for many schools that had been in a serious state of disrepair. However, she said many public school principals had been frustrated by the lack of transparency in the program and by their lack of autonomy over projects.

Ms Trimper said many did not know how much their projects were costing so it was hard for them to assess whether they were getting value for money. She said principles had become especially concerned they were not getting value for money when their projects were reduced in scope.

"The word 'descoping' was used regularly," Ms Trimper said. "People saw their projects shrinking, so that's when they started to say, 'We are not getting value for money'." She said this was exacerbated by the fact they were not managing the projects themselves. "That certainly came out as a frustrating factor for government schools," she said.

Ms Trimper said there was also frustration that some project managers were perceived to be gouging money during times of crisis.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/lack-of-control-in-building-projects-annoys-school-principals/story-e6frg6nf-1225868875805>

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BER probe no-show a sign of true state colours in Victoria

Milanda Rout, the Australian, 22 May 2010

NOTHING could have typified Victoria's approach to its implementation of the Building Education Revolution program better than its no-show at the Senate inquiry this week.

After months of criticism over the way the Brumby government has handled the rollout of the \$16.2 billion school buildings project, officials from the state education department could not even be bothered turning up to face the music.

This is exactly how they have treated schools, principals and parents in the BER process.

Instead of giving the federal government stimulus money directly to schools and letting them decide what to do with it - as the Catholic and independent sector did -- the Brumby government has hoarded it and decided who gets what.

The department calls it the collective approach, where it puts schools in regional groups of about 25 to "focus on the needs of local communities rather than individual schools".

In reality, it ignores federal Education Minister Julia Gillard's BER funding formula, based on student enrolments, and decides how much money a school gets from the BER.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/state-politics/ber-probe-no-show-a-sign-of-true-state-colours/story-e6frgczx-1225869548883>

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Bureaucracy eats third of school funds

Justine Ferrari, the Australian, 22 May 2010

ONE dollar in every three spent under the Building the Education Revolution scheme is being frittered away on needless bureaucratic costs, onerous documentation requirements and expensive building materials.

A preliminary assessment by Melbourne quantity surveying firm Swift Construction of the template library and classroom building used by the Victorian Education Department says the project management system for primary schools "ensures added cost for no discernible value adding to the project".

The report also says builders are required to hire a professional photographer to document every stage of construction.

The report by Swift Construction claims the documentation required for primary school buildings under the BER is at a level required for \$50 million projects, not \$3m classrooms, causing "hurt money" to be added to the costs.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/bureaucracy-eats-third-of-school-funds/story-e6frg6nf-1225869810507>

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INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Reinforcing Australia's education offer

Madonna King, ABC News, 25 May 2010

At first sight, it seems astonishing that the Queensland Government would even start to tell students they can offer them an education that could lead to a job, university admission or further training if they complete Year 12. If we have to say that, then what the hell are we teaching - let alone testing.

But that's the announcement - all Year 12 Indigenous students will be given the promise of an education that could lead to a job or a training position. It sounds a bit like saying that if you buy a ticket, you can complete a train ride. Or if you come to work, you'll get paid.

But that's what things have come to in the attempt to get some equality of educational outcomes between black and white Australia.

The offer we all take for granted - that a good state school education will prepare our children for a job, a training program or a university place - needs additional reinforcement when it comes to black Australia.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/25/2908259.htm>

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AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

ACT: Hire and fire powers for school principals

ABC News, 20 May 2010

School principals in the ACT will soon have the power to hire and fire teachers. Education Minister Andrew Barr has announced a shake-up of school management in response to a review of the system. Under the changes school principals will have the power to manage their own staff budgets and to appoint teachers.

Other functions such as cleaning and IT will be centralised within the Education Department.

"Our principals are education experts at the front line and they are best placed to decide how to use the resources they have to get the best result for the kids in their schools," Mr Barr said. "This system recognises their expertise and lets them get on with the job of running great schools."

New schools opening next year in Gungahlin and Kambah will be the first to use the system. "We want these new schools to lead the way with this new model but of course we are also opening it up to existing ACT public schools where the principals are ready to take on this challenge," Mr. Barr said.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/20/2904765.htm>

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ACT: Students login to learn

ABC News, 25 May 2010

An online learning program for students is being rolled out to all ACT public schools. Eight schools are currently involved in a trial of the program which gives students access to learning materials when away from the classroom.

Education Minister Andrew Barr says the education portal is revolutionising teaching.

"It will allow students to replay a lesson by podcast at home, use videolinks to practice speaking a language with a student at another school and have the option of completing their maths homework online," he said. "They will also be able to login from home to double check their homework requirements and create online portfolios of work."

"Students will be able to learn anywhere, anytime."

Mr. Barr says the technology will also help parents be more involved. "Being able to log into the system, look at what homework's been set, the progress of the class and student through particular courses of work, to see when

assignments are due - all that sort of stuff will enable parents, at a time that's convenient to them, to be able to login and have a look at what's going on at school," he said.

The announcement has upset teachers. Penny Gilmour from the Australian Education Union says the program will place unreasonable expectations on teachers if it is not properly resourced.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/25/2908924.htm>

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NSW: Health fears hit school heater plan

Lanai Vasek, the Australian, 20 May 2010

A PLAN to install potentially harmful unflued gas heaters in NSW public schools as part of the Building the Education Revolution program has been halted.

The health impact report, undertaken by the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research, is expected to be tabled in NSW parliament today, however authorities revealed yesterday they had already shelved the plan to install the controversial heaters in new BER projects.

Television reports last night alleged that NSW Premier Kristina Keneally had seen the findings of the report several months ago, but was refusing to release the study because it might mean the government had to remove previously installed unflued units.

Unflued gas heaters, which release a potentially poisonous cocktail of nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and formaldehyde, are being phased out of schools in every state except NSW and Queensland.

NSW education department director-general Michael Coutts-Trotter told ABC radio yesterday only 10 to 15 per cent of the 1800 BER projects in NSW had unflued heaters installed. He said the rest would be fitted with flued heaters.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/health-fears-hit-school-heater-plan/story-e6frg6nf-1225868877178>

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NSW: Report on safety of school heaters kept secret

Ben Cubby, Sydney Morning Herald, 20 May 2010

The NSW government is being accused of a cover-up after refusing to release test results it admitted showed "health effects" from unflued gas heaters on children in public schools.

It insisted fumes from the heaters did not pose "major health dangers". But the Asthma Foundation of NSW attacked the government's "vague comments" and said the results of an unreleased study should be made public urgently in the interests of tens of thousands of students and parents.

"Existing scientific studies do not support the thesis that these heaters are safe to operate in NSW classrooms," said the Asthma Foundation's chief executive, Greg Smith.

The report the government is holding is understood to show significant correlation between the unflued heaters and respiratory illness in children. The heaters are banned in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and the ACT, and in most developed countries, but 51,000 of them are used in NSW schools.

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/report-on-safety-of-school-heaters-kept-secret-20100519-vc2.html>

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NSW: Education Minister Verity Firth knew of school heater dangers

Herald Sun, 24 May 2010 (AAP)

EDUCATION Minister Verity Firth was warned by her department more than a year ago that unflued gas heaters in NSW schools were giving off indoor air pollution at "levels over that considered safe for human exposure".

The Sydney Morning Herald says a ministerial briefing note it obtained, the accuracy of which was endorsed by senior bureaucrats, contradicts many of the public statements Ms Firth has since made about the health impacts of the heaters.

The unflued heaters have in fact been tested annually since 2000, according to the ministerial briefing note sent to Ms Firth in April last year.

"Based on the results of this monitoring, NSW Health advised that a substantial proportion of the new unflued low-nox heaters were testing at nitrogen dioxide levels over that considered safe for human exposure," it said. There are 51,000 of the heaters in NSW public schools.

"Despite the Department of Health's warning, Verity Firth allowed her department to continue to install unflued gas heaters for another year," Greens MP John Kaye said. "She persisted with her attempts to placate public concern by maintaining that they were safe if used 'appropriately'."

Read entire article: <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/breaking-news/education-minister-verity-firth-knew-of-school-heater-dangers/story-e6frf7jx-1225870345261>

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NSW: Parents in dark over Dalwood centre future

ABC News, 25 May 2010

Parents say they still have no guarantees about the future of services at a Sydney-based school for rural children with learning difficulties, one day before the final residential program starts.

The last group of students for the residential course at the Dalwood Assessment Centre begins work tomorrow.

Coonabarabran mother Michelle Bolte says parents have been told they will have to wait for the recommendations from an expert advisory panel to find out if the services will continue.

She says this information is not expected until after the final residential program is finished.

"We still are in the dark about any residential occurring. We've been told that it's up to the expert advisory panel to make a decision on that but that won't occur until July sometime, keeping in mind that the last residential actually finishes in June," she said.

She says time is running out for students and parents.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/25/2908280.htm>

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NT: 'Teenage wasteland' failing kids: AEU

Eleni Roussos, ABC News, 25 May 2010

Northern Territory middle schools are "teenage wastelands" that are not properly preparing students for senior school, the Australian Education Union (AEU) says. The middle school system started in the Northern Territory three years ago.

The AEU's Northern Territory branch secretary, Adam Lampe, says students who have gone through the middle school system are struggling in senior school. "That's because suddenly they're expected to act in ways that they haven't acted before," he said.

The union says the system has put extra pressure on teachers to get students ready for Year 11 and 12. Mr Lampe says that causing teacher burn-out. "And I do not hear a lot of positive comments from members who are working in middle schools saying 'I love this job'. We don't get that."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/25/2908441.htm>

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QLD: Principals to get power to expel students

Kerrin Binnie, ABC News, 18 May 2010

Queensland school principals will be given more powers to expel students.

Currently, schools can only make a recommendation about expulsion.

Premier Anna Bligh says the Education Act will be amended to give principals more direct authority. But the State Government says parents will be able to appeal against a principal's decision.

Education Minister Geoff Wilson says expulsion is still the last resort.

"We want to reinforce that every school should set the highest expectations of appropriate student behaviour," he said. "That if those expectations are not appropriately met then the principal will have the primary power to expel a student."

Mr. Wilson says there could be more expulsions when principals are granted that power. He says the number of expulsions and suspensions have increased in the past 18 months.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/17/2901719.htm>

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QLD: School to trial youth court

Sam Burgess, ABC Southern Queensland, 24 May 2010

A school at Toowoomba on southern Queensland's Darling Downs will be the first to trial a new scheme where students judge their misbehaving peers.

The Toowoomba Advocacy and Support Centre (TASC) says it wants to test the youth court system, which has been used to stop teenagers in the US from becoming repeat offenders.

TASC spokeswoman Sue Gordon says the youth court will start at the Centenary Heights State High School in the next three months and will see students judging their peers.

"I know we will learn a lot as we go along - and I know there's no magic cure and we all recognise that," she said. "This is a way of trying to do things better using restorative justice principles as opposed to punishment and just going by the results over the past 10 years in America, it really is quite exciting."

Ms Gordon says the children-judging-children approach has proven results. "The research has reflected amazing results in that ... 50 per cent of the children who'd been through this process have remained in college courses and 88 per cent were employed or enrolled in school after completing their youth court involvement," she said.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/24/2907238.htm?site=southqld§ion=news>

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QLD: 'Growing budget crisis' in north Queensland TAFE

ABC News, 25 May 2010

The Public Sector Union says up to 180 staff at TAFE institutions across far north Queensland have been offered voluntary redundancy packages. The union says the packages are being offered to administrative and teaching staff amid a "growing budget crisis".

TAFE Queensland, which oversees institutes across the state, services 13,000 students at eight campuses including Cairns, Innisfail and Mareeba.

The union's Kevin O'Sullivan says staff are concerned some TAFE campuses on the Atherton Tablelands could close altogether. "Unfortunately the TAFE itself is being very, very vague about what actually they are planning to do," Mr O'Sullivan said.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/25/2908447.htm>

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QLD: Union concerned for safety of isolated teachers

Kristy Sexton-McGrath, ABC News, 25 May 2010

The Queensland Teachers Union (QTU) says it is concerned about the safety of teachers working in the Cape York indigenous community of Aurukun.

The Union says a 000 call to Aurukun police went unanswered when three men tried to break into the home of two female teachers early yesterday. The men scaled a fence but triggered security lights and ran when the women woke up and threatened to call police.

Maureen Duffy from the QTU says it was a frightening situation. "There were three intruders trying to get in through the side door and then the intruders were trying to get in through the front door," she said. "It was absolutely terrifying for them as you can well imagine.

"They tried ringing police - it diverted through to Cairns.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/25/2908496.htm>

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TAS: Autism funding meeting

ABC News, 24 May 2010

Supporters of an education program for children with autism are hopeful it will continue next term.

The Launceston based program, the A-Team is due to finish on Friday. Premier David Bartlett commissioned a review of the A-Team, which is due in June.

A-Team Supporter Lynne Knox says she believes the review will support her push for the A-Team to continue.

"From what we can see, there are some positive things in it, which are great," she said. "But ultimately that review has to go to the minister shortly and it will be up to her which parts of that review or all of it that she then accepts.

"So we're still in a waiting game - this is the third time in 12 months where this program has been put on hold waiting a decision about the future.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/24/2907400.htm>

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WA: State Budget 2010-11: New and improved schools a priority

Education Minister Liz Constable, 20 May 2010

Education Minister Liz Constable today announced spending of \$1.025billion on new schools and improvements to existing public schools over the next 12 months.

The funding includes Federal Government funding of \$425million from the Building the Education Revolution program.

Dr Constable said as part of this improvement in education service delivery to families, construction would begin in 2010-11 on six new or replacement primary schools, and three new or replacement secondary schools.

"We are continuing our investment in the asset improvement program to make sure our schools have the best possible facilities for staff and students," she said.

Read more at: <http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Lists/Statements/DispForm.aspx?ID=133494>

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WA: Call to recognise WA teachers as nominations open for 2010 education awards

Education Minister Liz Constable, 24 May 2010

Community members are urged to chalk one up for top public school teachers this year by nominating them for a prestigious WA Education Award.

The annual awards seek to acknowledge inspiring teachers, principals, support staff and schools in a range of categories, including the Premier's Teacher of the Year; WA Principal of the Year; and WA School Support Staff Member of the Year.

Education Minister Liz Constable said the awards had been expanded for 2010, with a new award for WA Beginning Teacher of the Year.

"These awards seek to recognise excellence in education, as well as the innovation and passion teachers bring to the classroom," Dr Constable said.

Read more at: <http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Lists/Statements/DispForm.aspx?ID=133570>

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REMINDERS

25-28 May - Inclusive Learning Technologies Conference - Gold Coast, QLD -
<http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/conference/>

26 May - School Law Professional Development Seminar - Melbourne, VIC -
http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product_details.asp?prodID=13500

26-28 May - Council of Educational Facility Planners International Conference - Perth, WA -
<http://australasia.cefpi.org/>

27 May - School Law Professional Development Seminar - Brisbane, QLD -
http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product_details.asp?prodID=13507

31 May - Costa's Garden Odyssey Competition closes -
<http://www.sbs.com.au/shows/costa/about/page/i/2/h/Competition/>

3 June - Dare to Lead National Indigenous Education Conference - Brisbane, QLD -
<http://www.daretolead.edu.au/servlet/Web?s=169694&action=downloadResource&resourceID=71060324>

3 June - School Law Professional Development Seminar - Perth, WA - http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product_details.asp?prodID=13530

4 June - School Law Professional Development Seminar - Sydney, NSW - http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product_details.asp?prodID=13521

4-5 June - Early Childhood Education Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.togetherwegrow.com.au/2010registration.html>

9-11 June - International Conference on Learning and Teaching - Singapore - <http://www.tp.edu.sg/events/intlconference/>

17-18 June - National Conference of Australian Special Education Principals' Association & Australian Association of Special Education - Darwin, NT - <http://www.gemsevents.com.au/aase2010/>

23-25 June - International Conference on New Horizons in Education - Famagusta, Cyprus - <http://www.int-e.net/index.php>

2 July - Victorian Mathematics and Statistics Students' Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.2010vmssc.ms.unimelb.edu.au/>

2-3 July - State Conference of Modern Language Teachers Association of Queensland - Brisbane, QLD - <http://mltag.asn.au/mod/resource/view.php?id=27>

4-7 July - National Conference for Teachers of English & Literacy - Perth, WA - <http://www.englishliteracyconference.com.au/index.php?id=46&year=10>

4-7 July - Australian Science Teachers Association Annual Conference - Sydney, NSW - <http://guest.cvent.com/EVENTS/Info/Summary.aspx?e=1a4004e5-1cf4-4df0-931f-94d23111a400>

6-9 July - 17th International Conference on Learning - Hong Kong - <http://thelearner.com/Conference-2010/>

7-9 July - Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.aifs.gov.au/conference>

7-10 July - Redefining TESOL for the 21st Century - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://www.astmanagement.com.au/ACTA10/Default.htm>

21-24 July - Second Paris International Conference on Education, Economy & Society - Paris, France - <http://education-conferences.org/default.aspx>

29-31 July - International Conference on Teacher Education - Quezon City, Philippines - <http://www.ictedphilippines.org/>

12-14 August - National Interactive Teaching and Learning Conference - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://www.iwb.net.au/conferences/australian10/>

14-22 August - National Science Week - <http://www.scienceweek.gov.au/Pages/index.aspx>

15-17 August - ACER Research Conference - Melbourne, VIC - http://www.acer.edu.au/research_conferences/

19-27 August - International Conference of Mathematicians - Hyderabad, India - <http://www.icm2010.org.in/>

25-27 August - European Conference on Educational Research - Helsinki, Finland - <http://www.helsinki.fi/ecer2010/index.html>

26-27 August - Annual School Leaders' Conference - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://www.griffith.edu.au/pdn-leadership-conference-2010>

3-4 September - Future Directions in Literacy Conference - Sydney, NSW - http://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/professional_learning/teachers/2010/future_directions_literacy.shtml

6 September - International Middle Years of Schooling Conference - Adelaide, SA - <http://sapmea.asn.au/conventions/middleschool2010/>

6-8 September - London International Conference on Education - London, UK - <http://www.liceducation.org/>

15-17 September - SPERA Conference, University of Sunshine Coast, Queensland - http://www.spera.asn.au/articles.php?req=list&root_id=13&sub_id=65

22 September - Language and Culture and Social Connectedness in Our Diverse Landscape Symposium - Toowoomba, QLD - <http://www.usq.edu.au/lcdl>

27-30 September - National Australian Association for Environmental Education Conference - Canberra, ACT - <https://www.conferenceco.com.au/aaee>

27-30 September - Australian Mathematical Society 54th Meeting - Brisbane, QLD - <http://www.smp.uq.edu.au/austms2010/>

27 September-1 October - International Association of School Librarianship Conference - Brisbane QLD - <http://www.iasl-online.org/events/conf/2010/>

October - International School Library Month - <http://www.iasl-online.org/events/islm/>

13 November - Hands on Literacy Conference - Singapore - <http://www.handsonlit.com/>

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ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://www.acsso.org.au/australian-education-digest/> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup/> (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/news/> (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://www.acsso.org.au/public-education-voice> (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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