

SCHOOLS | Comparisons opposed

Teachers ready

to take action

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TELLING parents how many children at each school meet national benchmarks for reading, writing and numeracy would lead to widespread industrial action, according to the Education Department.

The department has refused to release individual school information to *The Advertiser*, citing opposition by the teachers' union.

The response has drawn fire from parent representatives who say that it would help families make the best decision for their children.

In his letter, Education Department Legislation and Legal Services manager Don Mackie refers to an agreement between the Education Department and the Australian Education Union that schools will not be ranked.

"I have been advised by the

union that any breach of this protocol would result in widespread industrial action, especially in primary schools," Mr Mackie said.

Parents are given their own child's test results and state and national averages are made available.

Peak state body for governing councils, the South Australian Association of State School Or-

“ Embark on a campaign

ganisations executive director David Knuckey said there was a "good argument" for comparing schools.

"Parents already make choices about what school to send their child to," he said.

"It would be much better to be made with legitimate data rather than gossip."

But care was needed in how the information was released.

"We need to come up with a system that all stakeholders - parents included - agree on as in the best interests of education, not just the union," Mr Knuckey said.

The state's examination board earlier this year asked the State Government to prohibit the publication of school Year 12 results.

Australian Education Union vice-president Marcus Knill said the union "absolutely" opposed public comparisons between schools, saying he expected some form of industrial action by members.

"I dare say we would embark on a campaign that would not support any future information gathering," he said.

Comparisons between schools could be "very unfair" because of differences in the group of students at the school, he said.