

Misleading numbers

WHILE I applaud the article entitled "Special Schools spend funding on more staff" (EducationNow, 18/8/09) for highlighting the desperate and ongoing issues regarding funding staff in special schools, I would like to point out that the numbers stated at the end of the article are at the very least misleading, if not completely inaccurate. If 1031 students were taught by 229 teachers and 315 SSOs full-time, there would be a student-to-staff ratio of close to 2:1. Anyone visiting any of SA's special schools would clearly see that is not the case. In reality, the student-to-staff ratio is, at best, 8:1 - and that's on a good day.

KATRINA RAMSAY, Treasurer, Modbury Special School Governing Council.

(The statistics were provided by the Department of Education and Children's Services - Ed.)

'Youth Allowance' for MPs

IT'S just been announced that politicians are about to receive an increase in their travel and accommodation allowances.

I hope the politicians don't get their hopes up too high, as I am sure Julia Gillard will have something to say about it, as she did with the Youth Allowance for country students.

She should apply the same rules to politicians that she wants to force on country students in qualifying for their travel and accommodation allowance increases. Not one politician would qualify.

Country Australia produces the majority of the nation's wealth, yet the majority of the poor lives in rural areas. Policies like the changes to the Youth Allowance will ensure that people in rural Australia stay poor and are denied access to tertiary education, due to financial constraints which their city counterparts do not have to face.

RON GRAY, Loxton

Self-governing schools provide a better option

LAST week, I contributed to a feature in *The Advertiser* in which key stakeholders assessed our state's education system. A variety of issues were raised, but there was a consistent response to the question: Where should money be spent to improve education? Those who don't work for the government answered: Less money on centralised administration - more money in schools.

That same week, the Western Australian government announced its own revolution in education - independent public schools. Jane Lomax-Smith told us we don't want them in South Australia.

The WA program reads like SA's Partnerships 21 (P21) before it was hobbled. For those who don't know, under P21 SA school councils became governing councils, with powers and authorities to run the local school. It didn't last very long once the state government changed in 2002.

Under the Act, the governing council has the authority, autonomy and resources to plan, staff and operate the school. In reality, governing councils have limited and declining scope to make any positive impact on the school. Almost all the money is pre-spent by



DAVID KNUCKEY

SA Association of State School Organisations director

the Department of Education and Children's Services, the principal has little influence over staff selection and the governing council is more a policy taker than policy maker.

What went wrong? We decentralised the education Act, but we kept the centralised education department - and it has been a tug-of-war ever since.

Find a country where education is flourishing and you find a country with self-governing schools (SGS). The WA trial isn't some fringe theory. SGS is a global phenomenon because it delivers a better standard of education than the old, massive, centralised government department.

In New Zealand, they don't have an education department any more. A Ministry of Education handles curriculum and assessment, but everything else is done at the school level. In countries like the Netherlands, 94 per cent of all school decisions are made at the local

level; in Australia only 11 per cent are made with real autonomy.

Why are self-governing schools better? Because every school is different and the local community is better at adapting to local needs than a large government department. Parents and the local community:

ARE more committed to their children than bureaucracies are to their clients;

HAVE a better understanding of local problems than a government department;

ARE more flexible and creative than massive service agencies;

ARE cheaper than bureaucrats, leaving more dollars for the actual school.

It isn't just international studies that prove this. Look at what is happening in our own state. Four years ago, we had the national *Investing in Our Schools* program. Like the BER, schools applied for improvement grants, funding computers to buildings.

It worked wonderfully well. Why? Because the money went directly to schools and they spent it wisely.

Instead, it goes to the state governments and within months, there is an inquiry underway to investigate skimming, price-gouging and waste.

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The Principal
University Senior College
North Terrace
UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE SA 5005

Or via email usc@adelaide.edu.au

Further details can be obtained from Ms Laurene Skinner, Principal's Assistant, 8303 4988

Applications close Friday, 28th August 2009.

25.8 3080317V1



St Peters Lutheran School, an IB PYP School, invites applications for the following full-time permanent position commencing at the start of the 2010 school year.

EARLY LEARNING CENTRE DIRECTOR

A recognised Early Childhood Teaching Qualification is required.

For more information on this position go to www.stpeterslutheran.sa.edu.au (enquiries page)

Applications close Wednesday 9/09/09

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Government of South Australia
Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology

PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS TO THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TASKFORCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education, the Hon Michael O'Brien MP, has initiated a project to ensure that Adelaide provides Australia's best lifestyle and educational experience for our overseas students.

Chaired by Bill Spurr, the International Student Experience Taskforce has been established to investigate key issues affecting the experience overseas student have while studying in Adelaide. As part of this project, the Taskforce is seeking public submissions on a range of issues being considered including:

- Accommodation and accommodation services
- Student welfare and safety
- Employment
- Cultural and Social Engagement

Members of the public and key interest groups are invited to provide written submissions by 5:00pm, Friday 25 September, either by email to heidi.greaves@sa.gov.au or to the following address:

Executive Officer
International Student Taskforce
DFEEST Higher Education Directorate
GPO Box 320
ADELAIDE SA 5000

12247

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Teaching Appointments

TEACHING POSITIONS FOR 2010



PEMBROKE SCHOOL

A Co-educational, Non-denominational, Day and Boarding School from ELC to Year 12. Pembroke School is an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School.

PHONE: 08 8366 6225
FAX: 08 8366 6224

342 THE PARADE, KENSINGTON PARK, SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5068
EMAIL jobs@pembroke.sa.edu.au www.pembroke.sa.edu.au

Junior School Physical Education Teacher
Permanent Part-time. Commencing Term 1, 2010

Economics/Business Teacher - Middle and Senior School
Contract Full-time for 2010

Geography Teacher - Years 8 to 12
Contract Full-time. Term 1, 2010 only

We are seeking enthusiastic, suitably qualified and registered teachers for these positions commencing in 2010.

There are no Job and Person Specifications for these roles, however a statement of information to applicants is available from Mrs Joy Bacon, Executive Assistant to the Principal at the contacts listed below.

Applications, including contact details of two professional referees should be addressed to Mr M L Lamb, Principal, Pembroke School.

Applications by mail, facsimile or email must be received by 4.00pm on Friday 4th September 2009.

Pembroke School is an equal opportunity employer. No plastic folders please.

WILDERNESS SCHOOL

Music Teacher / Piano Accompanist

Permanent Full-time commencing Term 1 2010
R-7 classes (0.6), Accompanist (0.4)

Our Music Department is lauded for its vibrant and diverse music program.

We are seeking a versatile and enthusiastic music educator to join our Music Department in 2010. Knowledge and understanding of Kodaly and Orff methodologies essential.

The ability to accompany choirs and individual soloists is essential.

Applications for the position should include the names and telephone numbers of two professional referees and should be addressed to:

Mrs Jane Danvers

Principal

Wilderness School

30 Hawkers Road, Medindie 5081

or emailed to lwilliams@wilderness.com.au

Applications close on Tuesday 1 September 2009

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