

Performance Pay

Since 2007, SAASSO has been calling for Performance Pay to be introduced for South Australia's public school teachers. This call is endorsed by many other countries, supported by numerous studies and is echoed by key stakeholders:

- The Rudd Government's Education Revolution manifest
- The 2007 ACER Report
- The Australian Primary Principals Association
- The ACT branch of the Australian Education Union
- The Business Council of Australia
- The Rewarding Teacher Quality Report, commissioned by the Howard Government and last year accepted by MCEETYA.

Around half of OECD countries already have additional pay linked to outstanding performance or professional development¹.

The 2008 OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) reveals that when it comes to rewarding teacher performance, Australia ranks almost dead last. More than 90% of Australia's teachers receive no incentive to improve their performance.

The Rudd Government's Education Revolution cites teacher quality as the number one item on the reform agenda; with clear evidence that teacher quality is the number one influence on a child's education (see Teacher Quality section of this submission). There are several clear problems in Australia's management of its teachers, which is negatively impacting on the quality of our teaching:

- we do not attract enough high-calibre candidates into teaching
- we do not reward teachers for continuing to develop their subject knowledge and skills over a career
- we do not keep enough of our best teachers in the classroom, where we need them.

The lack in opportunity to continue to develop career and salary are obvious influencers on these 3 points. While Australian starting salaries are very competitive by international standards – after 15 years in the job, our teachers drop into the bottom half of the OECD pool¹. The only way to increase your salary at this point is to move into a leadership position (and out of the classroom) or leave teaching altogether.

While states such as Victoria are this year trialling a model of performance pay for its teachers, South Australia is mired in protracted and damaging industrial relations conflict. Perhaps nowhere else is a performance pay system more desperately needed than in SA.

Recommendation

- The State Government take the lead in implementing this aspect of the Education Revolution, sooner rather than later, by establishing and trialling performance pay in our state's public schools; before the next round of Enterprise Bargaining (originally due in less than 12 months) commences.
- The State Government confine its scope to a Knowledge & Skill-Based Pay model or Certification-Based Pay model – excluding Merit Pay (bonus) systems, likely to do more harm than good.
- The State Government genuinely work with all stakeholders to develop this model(s).

1. Education at a Glance 2009. OECD.