

Teacher Pay Report

A new OECD report reinforces the need for a performance pay model for Australian teachers. The 'Teaching & Learning International Survey' polled 90,000 teachers from 200 schools, across 23 countries.

It exposes the shortage of quality teachers and reveals that Australian teachers are the least likely to be rewarded with performance pay. Fewer than 10% of Australian teachers believe they would receive a pay rise or any form of reward for improving the quality of their teaching.

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Merit Selection

Following on from a feature in School Post, 'The Advertiser' ran a story on the threat to Governing Councils retaining any meaningful role in the appointment of school principals.

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Swine Flu - School Closures

We have seen sporadic school closures due to the flu. The virus has now spread to the point where containment is unlikely. As such, the government has moved us to 'Protect' phase - focussed on care for those infected, rather than isolation.

This means we will no longer have widespread school closures or the exclusion of students who have travelled to high risk areas.

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School Post

The latest issue of School Post is in schools now. The term 2 edition includes features on:

- Merit Selection: the plan to double principal tenure and remove Governing Councils from the process.
- Teach for Australia: how the controversial plan has succeeded overseas.
- Education Ombudsman: the parliamentary proposal to create an independent education watchdog.

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Power Drain

One of the many 'savings' strategies designed to fund the Super Schools, is the order for schools to reduce their electricity consumption.

However, rising costs and an increased reliance on technology, is seeing numerous schools struggling to meet the 25% cut target; resulting in some being hit with extraordinary power bills - some schools reporting debts of \$125,000.

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BER

The opposition, teachers and principals urged the Federal Government to review the \$14.7 billion Building and Education Revolution program. Claims of wastage, rigid guidelines and inflated construction costs are threatening to derail the scheme.

Preschools have joined in the criticism, having being excluded from the BER program. They claim more money needs to be spent, with latest research suggesting preschool is the most significant learning stage.

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Keeping Track of Truancy

Golden Grove High School turned to software to deal with their student truancy. In partnership with 'Code House' the school developed STATS: Student Timetable Absence Tracking System - a swipecard that tracks students.

Unlike the DECS system, which only reports whether a child showed up for school in the morning, STATS tracks students in and out of each class and behaviour incidents.

The school now has an absenteeism rate of 1.6%, well below the state average of 4.8%. Four other schools are now using the system, but DECS has no plans develop the system.

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International Science Fair

This week, Adelaide plays host to the annual International Science Fair, at the Australian Science and Mathematics School. Year 10 and Year 11 students from all over the world including South Korea, Canada and Thailand come together to maintain a network of international connections.

School groups from Japan and Singapore cancelled their trip due to the Swine Flu.

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Focus on the basics - 'overdue'

After being told they had nothing to complain about in terms of the literacy and numeracy skills of their children, parents were pleased to learn the State Government is introducing mandatory minimums for teaching these subjects.

As SAASSO reported last week, Australia devotes little time to teaching maths, science and literacy compared to the rest of the world.

'The Advertiser's' *Education Now* liftout reports how necessary these new minimum standards are.

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