

Parents in call for education ombudsman

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THE state's key parent body says complaints to the education department are often ignored, sparking calls for an education ombudsman.

The South Australian Association of State School Organisations says an education ombudsman would provide an independent official with the power to investigate the public system.



In a recent SAASSO publication, it said: "We may be free to complain, but with no advocacy arrangement, the Government is free to ignore us; and generally does."

Director David Knuckey said it was "the norm" in the developed world to have an independent body parents and teachers could bring their issues to the attention of.

"If you've got a problem with your child's education you can only complain to the education department, which is who your complaining about," he said.

"An ombudsman would avoid that conflict."

SAASSO believes an edu-

cation ombudsman should have the powers of a royal commission and be bestowed with the authority to compel the department and all other education authorities to act.

SA Secondary Principals Association president Jim Davies said he believed issues, especially parent complaints, were usually best dealt with at the school level.

Family First MLC Robert Brokenshire said he planned to reintroduce his Education

Ombudsman Bill to parliament later this year.

He said with the education budget at \$2.66 billion, it would be worth "a couple hundred thousand dollars" to set up an ombudsman's office. Opposition Education spokesman David Pisoni said it was Liberal Party policy to employ an education ombudsman.

Education Minister Jay Weatherill ruled out an ombudsman.