



This week's stories from the media

- DECD staff to switch offices instead of being sent to school
- NAPLAN standards too low
- Students struggle because teachers lack confidence
- Computers in class a scandalous waste
- Teens want more and better sex ed
- Safe Schools tells parents: tough luck
- Mother pleads for Safe Schools program to continue

### NAPLAN Standards Too Low

The national minimum standards in NAPLAN tests are far too low, a report from the Grattan Institute says.

The national minimum standards in NAPLAN tests are so low that Year 9s can meet them if they are reading at a Year 5 level.

The independent think-tank also found evidence of huge performance gaps developing between high and low achieving students over the course of the literacy and numeracy testing from Years 3 to 9.

The study benchmarked NAPLAN scores against those of the median performer, allowing researchers to judge how many years' learning students were ahead or behind of their typical peers.

A spokesman for ACARA, which runs NAPLAN, said it was "normal to revisit performance expectations over time".

The state Education Department said the national standards were a matter for ACARA.

[Read the full story](#)

### DECD Staff To Switch Offices Instead Of Being Sent Back To School

**Hundreds of Education Department staff will be shunted between offices instead of being sent to work in schools in a backflip on a promised restructure, the Opposition claims.**

It is understood many will be sent just a few kilometres from the Flinders St head office to work in the Education Development Centre at Hindmarsh.

Last year the Government announced it planned to move some staff away from the CBD to better support schools.

In August the department confirmed it would be "relocating 300 staff from central office to work directly with schools to improve program delivery and teaching practices".

Education Minister Susan Close told Parliament this week a "significant number" of staff had "already gone back to schools".

Opposition education spokesman John Gardner said the public had expected more classroom support for students.

"Moving a unit from one section of the Education Department building in Flinders St to another Education Department building ... is not good enough," he said.

"There's no compelling evidence there will be extra resources in classrooms."



Dr Close said it was always clear that "working with schools" meant the 300 staff would spend some time in schools, without replacing teachers, while also running teacher training and professional development.

She said 125 head office positions were being cut through retirements, redundancies, non-renewal of contracts and teachers returning to schools.

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***“If I had a choice between filling a classroom with laptops or hiring another teacher, I’d take the other teacher every day of the week.”***

### Students Struggle Because Teachers Lack Confidence

**Australian teenagers are increasingly struggling to achieve the basic level required in information and communications technology (ICT).**

In 2014, only half of students in Year 10 achieved the minimum standard of digital competence.

There is a risk that a large proportion of students may be left behind, at a time when digital competence is becoming central to future employment.

Research shows that one reason students could be falling down is actually to do with teachers' lack of competence in this area.

Many Australian teachers feel they lack the level of digital competence envisaged to deliver the curriculum.

Literacy and numeracy tests are being introduced for teacher registration.

If we are to follow that path, digital competence tests should also be required for teacher registration.

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### Computers In Class A Scandalous Waste

**A top Australian school has banned laptops in class, warning that technology “distracts” from old-school quality teaching.**

Sydney headmaster, John Vallance, described the billions of dollars spent on computers in Australian schools as a “scandalous waste of money”.

Mr. Vallance’s school has banned students from bringing laptops to school. Its old-school policy bucks the trend in most Australian high schools, and many primary schools, to require parents to purchase laptops for use in the classroom.

“We find that having laptops or iPads in the classroom inhibit conversation - it’s distracting”.

“If you’re lucky enough to have a good teacher and a motivating group of classmates, it would seem a waste to introduce anything that’s going to be a distraction from the benefits that kind of social context will give you.”

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### Teens Want More & Better Sex Ed

**A new university report has found that students want more in sex ed than just a biology lesson.**

They also want ‘learning to extend beyond how to put a condom on a banana’.

The two topics students want greater knowledge on were gender diversity and violent relationships - with more girls than boys listing this as their top priorities.

Boys want more information on how to have sex, sexual pleasure, masturbation and pornography.

Deakin University’s Dr Debbie Ollis, says teaching boys about pornography, and the other topics, could help defeat misconceptions about sex and relationships.

[Full Story](#)

### Safe Schools Tells Parents Tough Luck

**Safe Schools operatives have been coaching educators to dismiss parental concerns over the contentious sex and gender diversity program, asserting that parents are powerless to shut it down.**

A Safe Schools national symposium was told by the program’s co-ordinator, Roz Ward, that schools could ignore concerns raised about the agenda.

“When people do complain then school leadership can very calmly and graciously say, ‘You know what? We’re doing it anyway, tough luck!’” she told more than 300 attendees.

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### Mother Pleads For Safe Schools

**The mother of a transgender primary school student is pleading for funding of the Safe Schools program to continue, saying her daughter was suicidal before it changed her life.**

The child, 11, was born a boy but insisted she was a girl since she was a toddler. She became “suicidal and completely unmanageable” in 2014, her mother says .

She said the Safe Schools Coalition provided crucial support to help her daughter move to a new school while protecting her transgender identity through a legal name change.

[Read more](#)