



This week's stories from the media

- 50 education or child protection staff suspended with pay
- Orders to remove hat cords
- Report shows State Government cut \$56m from schools
- Year 12 English can be passed by reading one novel
- 6 month olds to learn maths
- Half of SA childcare centres failing
- SA schools switch to online NAPLAN

Orders To Remove Hat Cords

Public schools have been ordered to remove cords from all school hats and hooded tops, following cases of students being accidentally strangled.

The Education Department has issued a "hazard alert" to schools and preschools after The Advertiser revealed that a girl, 6, had to be saved by an older schoolmate when her hat cord snagged on a slide in Adelaide's south.

Schools have been ordered to:

- Inspect students' hats and remove any cords.
- Check hat stocks in their uniform shops and remove any cords, including draw strings on hooded tops.
- Ensure play equipment is free from "pinch points, sharp edges or protrusions" that may catch on cords, drawstrings and toggles.
- Ensure children use play equipment appropriate for their age and are properly supervised.

[Read the article](#)

50 Education Or Child Protection Staff Suspended With Pay

Fifty education or child protection workers have been suspended with pay, a near tenfold rise since crimes forced major reviews.

Assuming an annual average salary of \$60,000, the cost to taxpayers this year will be \$3 million.

The Public Service Association has told The Advertiser some staff have been on forced leave for more than two years as investigations dragged on due to a lack of "leadership" to resolve them.

FOI documents obtained by the Opposition show a total of 53 education and child development department staff were suspended in 2015-16, 50 of them with pay.

Opposition spokesman Sam Duluk said the Government should be alarmed.

"It should be a real concern for the minister that 50 people in her department are currently suspended on full pay," he said.

Dr Close said "serious staffing issues" were now recorded and managed centrally, as "greater guidance" was also provided to schools to ensure all necessary protocols were followed.

PSA general secretary Nev Kitchin said, "We have a number of examples of people suspended with pay for over two years."



"Justice isn't being served in that longwinded process."

"Then you've also got to backfill every worker that you suspend."

"You've got to have leadership. It is the allocation of resources, and the direction to them."

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“...If it is seen as academic preparation for university, students are going to be in a bit of trouble....”

Report Shows State Government Cut \$56 Million From Schools

Education Minister Simon Birmingham has accused the State Government of “spectacular” hypocrisy on school funding, with a report showing it slashed \$56 million from public schools in a single year.

The state’s spending on public schools fell from \$2.450 billion to \$2.394 billion in 2014/15 when adjusted for inflation.

State funding per public school student dropped from \$14,682 to \$14,312, while federal funding rose from \$2237 to \$2307.

Mr Birmingham said the figures showed that states were shifting the costs of their schools onto the Commonwealth, and SA was the worst offender. But the State Government said it spent more directly on schools in that year while reducing other “corporate” costs.

The Productivity Commission’s annual Report on Government Services also reveals the cost of childcare in SA grew at close to twice the national rate last year.

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Year 12 English Can Be Passed By Reading One Novel

Students can pass the toughest Year 12 English course reading one novel and one play, sparking calls that it must be made more rigorous by requiring study of more long-form fiction.

Teachers say the new SACE English Literary Studies course, a revamp of the former English Studies subject, has reduced the number of major “texts” students have to study from seven to five. Up to two of those can be movies, and a selection of poetry counts as another.

But university experts warn the curriculum is not comprehensive enough, especially when young people read far less of their own volition compared to previous generations.

Adelaide University Associate Professor in English and Creative Writing, Mandy Treagus, said the course was “not asking a lot of them in terms of reading”.

“If it is seen as academic preparation for university, they (students) are going to be in a bit of trouble, she said.

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6 Month Olds To Learn Maths

Parents are being encouraged to teach babies as young as 6-months-old basic maths concepts as Australia continues to slide in global numeracy rankings.

A new Baby Mathletics app targets children from six months old to 24 months old.

It’ll be the first in a series of apps for toddlers in the Mathletics range.

Education experts say it’s “critical” for children to know basic maths skills before they enter preschool.

It comes as Australian educators scramble to boost literacy and numeracy outcomes as the nation’s place in global rankings continues to decline.

[Full Story](#)

Half Of SA Childcare Centres Failing

More than half of South Australia’s childcare providers are yet to be assessed or are failing to meet national quality standards, new education data reveals.

Analysis of national registers shows 607 of the state’s 1165 providers - or 52.1% - are either classified as “not yet assessed” or “working towards” national quality standards.

The figures show 558 - or 47.9% - of SA childcare providers are meeting or exceeding national quality standards - the lowest percentage in the country and well below the national average of 62.7%.

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SA Schools Switch To Online NAPLAN

Major high schools including Glenunga International, Henley and Roma Mitchell will be among the first 50 SA public schools to switch to online NAPLAN testing this year.

The mix of primary and secondary campuses from across the state was chosen based on their success in widespread trials that assessed schools’ readiness for the transition.

All Australian schools must move from pen and paper to computer testing by 2019.

The Advertiser recently revealed the trials, conducted in more than 90%t of public schools last year, found only half were ready because of technical issues.

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