



South Australian Association Of State School Organisations Inc.

## Profile







The South Australian Association of State School Organisations Incorporated (SAASSO) is a not-for-profit body, incorporated under the Associations Act.

SAASSO's state council is elected by SAASSO affiliates.

The state council appoints SAASSO's board.

**SAASSO is the parent association for public schools in South Australia.**

A volunteer organisation, SAASSO has been supporting the role and right of parents in the education of their children since 1923.

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**SAASSO is the Governing Council Association for South Australia's public schools.**

SAASSO supports and advocates for the parent-led Governing Councils in their role as the governing body in SA's public schools.

The foundation of Local Governance is that the local community - parents, teachers, members of the local community and principals are best equipped to determine the needs of their children and therefore the policies and strategic direction of their local school.

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### SAASSO's Vision

All schools are different and so have different needs. Local Governance is your school community - not the education department - making the decisions at your local school, in the best interests of your children. Research shows that Local Governance is superior to central bureaucracies, because parents and the local community:

- are more committed to their members than central bureaucracies are to their clients
- understand their problems better than a bureaucracy
- are more flexible and creative than large bureaucracies
- are cheaper than bureaucrats, leaving more dollars for actual service delivery.

The OECD states that the benefits of Local Governance include:

- increased efficiency
  - improved financial control
  - reduction of bureaucracy
  - increased responsiveness to local communities
  - creative management of human resources
  - improved potential for innovation
  - creation of conditions that improve education quality.
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### SAASSO's Mission

While our Education Act theoretically bestows Governing Councils with the authority, autonomy and resources to plan, staff and operate their schools - in practice, Governing Councils have limited scope to make decisions to impact on the school.

Academics have described principals and Governing Councils as being 'caught in a power struggle with education departments'. As such, our school system remains centralised, limiting the development of true self-governing & self-managing schools.

Local Governance is a 'Global phenomenon, liberating schools from bureaucratic shackles'. We must - finally - achieve true Local Governance if we are to give our children the quality of education they will need in the 21st century.



new healthy eating pyramid - agm - the cost of education - hidden harm alcohol's impacts - australian mensa gifted children - indigenous education - screen time - happiness survey - way2go bike education program - sace - children's eye health - post school transition students with disability - home & away - naplan's online move - no job no pay - police checks - it's not all about sex - early childhood development snapshot - school bags - guidelines for oshc educators working alone - teachers registration board - literacy tests for teachers - special needs inquiry - the teacher workforce - child care subsidy - australia at a glance - let's play survey - starting blocks - new education & care qualifications - classroom ready teachers - hunger in the classroom - youth survey - the buck stops where - the cost of raising kids - questions from south australia's parents - is it okay to be away - teaching and learning senate report - oshc additional needs - decd procurement framework - sex abuse timeline - higher standards for teacher training courses - safe schools framework - governing council committees - education expectations - chaplains - oshc policies - regional education - parent survey - how young people are faring - poverty in australia - teacher pay - home learning environment - oxfam - obesity in australia - be sunsmart about vitamin d - social outcomes of education - school size - teacher job satisfaction - will young australians be better off - how much time do teachers spend teaching - childcare and early learning - top issues for young australians - spend per student - turning schools around - the new work order - children's vision - is it okay to be away - children behind in speech - sace evaluation - let's read them a story - childcare costs - does preschool help - our land, our languages - class size - adolescent literacy - australian curriculum - computer use in australian schools - new educator to child ratios - international education - oecd repeating grades - sporting schools - australia's welfare



SAASSO provides a range of services to its members; South Australia's public school Governing Councils.

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### Advice

Chief amongst member's benefits is independent, expert advice on the role, rights & responsibilities of the Governing Council.

SAASSO responds to thousands of contacts every year from concerned parents & Governing Councillors.

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Members can access help three ways:

Email [info@saasso.asn.au](mailto:info@saasso.asn.au)

Submit questions online  
[saasso.asn.au/services/contact-us/](https://saasso.asn.au/services/contact-us/)

Call our advice line on 8223 2266

### Training

SAASSO provides training to Governing Councils to assist them acquit their vital roles in our public schools.

Delivered by qualified trainers and experienced governing councillors, SAASSO offers the following information sessions:

- introduction to governance - a comprehensive overview of the role of the Governing Council; from its composition to a step by step for developing a site learning plan
  - school budget - from financial delegation to recovering your materials and services fee; this session covers the Governing Council's role in developing, approving and monitoring the school budget
  - OSHC - Governing Councils are the legal operator and employer of a school's OSHC; this session explores the responsibilities and authority of the Governing Council
  - meeting procedures - covers everything you need to know to run your meetings smoothly, legally and enjoyably; from a points of order, to special resolutions, to standing orders.
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### School Post

School Post is the journal of the association.

Published each term, School Post is the magazine for public school parents and Governing Councils.

Completely independent, School Post breaks education stories, sparks debate, influences policy and is required reading for anyone interested in public education in South Australia.

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### Discretionary Trust

Much of your school's property is covered should the unfortunate occur. There are, however, limitations on what is covered by the government; especially when it comes to Governing Councils.

The JGS / SAASSO Discretionary Trust, provides cover specifically for these exclusions, and is exclusive to SAASSO members.



SAASSO was formed in April 1923; originally named the South Australian Public Schools Committees' Association. The inaugural meeting was held at Adelaide High School, then located in Grote Street. Our name was changed to SAASSO in 1970. In 1972 school committees became school councils and our current role began.

### Website

SAASSO's Education Portal [www.saasso.asn.au](http://www.saasso.asn.au) provides members a wealth of resources to equip them for their role in the governance of their public schools, including:

- governance templates and resources
- training information
- news alerts
- e-updates & bulletins
- fact sheets
- school post
- media
- advocacy
- federal programs
- frequently asked questions.

SAASSO's site also provides the latest information on a range of education topics:

- aboriginal education
- amalgamations
- chaplains
- children's wellbeing
- early years
- extra curricular programs
- governing councils
- SACE & senior students
- special needs education.

Parents can also utilise SAASSO's [online advisory service](#).

The SAASSO website, together with the thousands of members of the SAASSO email directory, enable us to keep in continual contact with our members, ensuring they have the most up-to-date information on public education.

### Education Update

SAASSO's *Education Update* is our media monitoring service. The *e-Update* gives members an uncensored, unabashed synopsis of the week's education news; from local and national media and education publications. The update is emailed to Governing Councillors, parents and stakeholders.

The *Education Update* is perhaps our most popular service, read by thousands of South Australians every week; from parents, Governing Councillors and school staff to our state and federal parliamentarians.

In an age when everyone is time poor - particularly volunteers - and information abounds, it's hard to keep up to date with everything you need to know. SAASSO's *Education Update* briefs you on what experts & stakeholders are saying and what the media are reporting, in their words.

Since the *Education Update* began in 2009:

- more than 330 editions have been published
- more than 2,250 stories reported.

### Bulletin

SAASSO emails a regular Bulletin to members.

The Bulletin delivers the latest education news, research, events, surveys to parents and governing councillors. Bulletins include original SAASSO articles, Fact Sheets, the latest national and international data and SAASSO surveys,

The Bulletin also keeps members up to date on SAASSO's advocacy projects and stakeholder news.

The Bulletin covers children's wellbeing, child development as well as early years, primary and secondary education.







SAASSO has released a series of public education submissions. The submissions aimed at improving public education and enhancing the wellbeing of our children. In light of the DeBelle sex abuse scandal, Submission One advocated placing power in the hands of the school community. Submission Two called for greater commitment to preschool. Submission Three addressed ongoing issues with educating our special needs students. Submission Four called for recognising dyslexia as a disability and providing the associated support.



In addition to direct services to members, SAASSO also advocates for public school parents and Governing Councils.

Identified through research, our state council, delegations from schools and individual parents, SAASSO raises issues and proposes solutions to the state and federal governments.

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SAASSO's previous submission identified four key areas of education.

### Parents' Rights

1. Creation of an education ombudsman.
2. Government-funded SAASSO inductions for all Governing Councils.

### Preschool

1. Preschool increase from 12 to 24 months for all children.
2. Introduction of zoning, to guarantee all children a space in their local preschool.

### Special Needs

1. NEPs for all students with learning difficulties and disabilities.
2. Awareness training for all school staff and specialised training for all teachers of special needs students.
3. Independent assessment of special needs students.

### Dyslexia

1. Recognition of dyslexia as a disability.
2. Early independent assessments to achieve early diagnosis.
3. Training for teachers to recognise early signs of dyslexia.

## Education Policy

SAASSO works with the parliament, ministers and the education department to ensure the perspectives, needs and experiences of public school parents and Governing Councils inform education policy.

SAASSO was instrumental in maintaining the rights of Governing Councils during the writing of the new Education Act.

SAASSO is currently working with the Education Department on a variety of programs - from the implementation of a new financial management program to the transition of Year 7 to High School.

SAASSO's submissions are driven by direct input from parents and Governing Councils, feedback from SAASSO surveys, and the latest local and international education research.

If you have an issue, topic, situation or experience you would like SAASSO to consider, please email [info@saasso.asn.au](mailto:info@saasso.asn.au)

## Special Needs

SAASSO successfully lobbied to have GPS and CCTV installed in all vehicles transporting special needs children.

Alerted by parents, SAASSO campaigned to ensure that special needs children are afforded the support they are entitled to when sitting NAPLAN.

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## Education Ombudsman

Since 2009, SAASSO has called for an education ombudsman - an independent watchdog for education in our state.

Research supports SAASSO's call for the operation of public schools to be separated from the regulatory functions. 'An education ombudsman could be established to consider concerns raised by people - increasing transparency and accountability'.

SAASSO will continue to push for an independent advocate for children's education and protection.

SAASSO is working with the Education Minister and State Parliament to finally deliver an Education Ombudsman for South Australia.

“Around the world, far too many girls do not have access to the same opportunities as boys. It’s a credit to these children that they are doing something to help.”

“Parents and staff were clear in their comments that the safety of children far outweighs the costs of testing all volunteers.”

“The response also show dissatisfaction with existing policies and strong support for a fundamental shift in how we combat the scourge of bullying.”

“Schools don’t receive anywhere near enough money for infrastructure.”

“Parents and educators believe truancy to be a complicated problem, with multiple contributing factors, which won’t be solved by fines.”

“With negative gender stereotypes known to have disastrous impacts on female students, is it time to rethink making them dress like ‘girls?’”





SAASSO represents parents and Governing Councils to education stakeholders, departments, ministers and parliamentarians.

SAASSO gathers data from its members, parents and our public schools.

SAASSO contributes to state and federal consultation processes.

SAASSO also contributes to public debate, through the media; ensuring the parent voice is heard.

SAASSO sends delegations to meet with education stakeholders; to raise issues and present the parent & Governing Council perspective:

- Education Minister
- Shadow Education Minister
- Education Department
- Honourable Members of the Legislative Council.

SAASSO is a signatory to the *Advancing the Community Together* partnership between the State Government and the volunteer community.



### SAASSO Surveys

SAASSO conducts regular online parent surveys.

SAASSO's surveys collect the opinions & perspectives of SA's public school parents & staff on a variety of education and child wellbeing topics.

The immediacy of online surveying, enables SAASSO to capture parent / educator feedback as issues occur; facilitating genuine community input into decision-making.

SAASSO's first online survey focussed on school hours. Results showed support for a longer school day among parents & across -the-board interest in evening classes for high school. The survey also highlighted parent concern about homework.



SAASSO provides input into state and federal education policy:

- SACE Strategic Plan
- Education Act
- National Safe Schools & Bullying Framework
- Child Development Bill
- Child Protection Policy
- National Teacher Standards
- Reform of Federation - Early Childhood & Schools

### Media

SAASSO provides the parent perspective in local and national media and education publications - on a range of education and child welfare topics; immunisation, special needs, bullying, NAPLAN, Dyslexia, behaviour management, funding, and child protection.