



This week's stories from the media

- Parents big lever to lifting academic outcomes
- SAASSO Survey 26: period poverty
- Class sizes are not the big issue in school standards
- SA preschools eligible for new support program
- School training overhaul
- Banning mobile phones in schools
- New play tackles youth suicide

SAASSO Survey: Period Poverty

Should the SA State Government provide free female sanitary products in our public schools?

A new South Australian report into child poverty recommends schools offer 'free, easily accessible and non-stigmatising provision of sanitary products to female school students'.

This comes on the heels of the announcement by the Victorian State Government that girls at every public primary, secondary and specialist school will get free tampons and pads by the middle of next year - citing them as 'essential as toilet paper and soap'.

What do you think?



[Take The Survey](#)

Parents Big Lever To Lifting Academic Outcomes

Every parent of a public school student in SA will be surveyed by education department officials as they try to work out how to boost our student's performance.

Every public school parent will be surveyed about their involvement in their children's learning, as the Education Department flags better engagement with families as the next "big lever" to lifting academic outcomes.

And department chief executive Rick Persse says governing councils are an "untapped resource" eager to play a bigger role.

"High-performing systems, high-performing schools, high-performing kids have engaged parents and communities around them. I feel like we can do more in that space," Mr Persse said, stressing it was about what the department and schools could do to foster parent engagement and not about any parenting "deficit".

He said schools' communication with parents was vital, citing a UK study that found one of the most cost-effective measures was sending texts to mums and dads about students' upcoming tests.

Mr Persse said a gathering of governing council chairpersons from all over the state had shown they wanted guidance in a range of areas, including "how they can be more useful on student achievement".

"It's OK for the governing council to be curious about teaching and learning, not just the canteen and the carpark and the landscaping and the finances and so on," he said.

[More](#)



“...It’s OK for the governing council to be curious about teaching and learning, not just the canteen and the carpark...”

Class Sizes Are Not The Big Issue In School Standards

There has been a great deal of discussion in recent times around class sizes and I tend to agree with the University of Melbourne’s Professor John Hattie “that a bad teacher of a class of 25 is still a bad teacher of a class of 15”.

With Australian class sizes sitting within the OECD recommendations we need to be looking well beyond class sizing to understand why we are slipping down global education rankings.

Creating a supportive relationship with students and encouraging them to open their minds to learning must be the number one priority of all teachers.

This is the first lesson that a trainee teacher should be taught at university and impressed upon them from the moment they step into a classroom — the quality of the relationship they have with a student will determine the quality of the learning outcomes.

That is not to say that teaching standards cannot be improved, and an area of growing concern to me is the divide between private and public school education.

[More](#)

SA Preschools Eligible For New Support Program

A new South Australian Department of Education funding model, designed to support children with additional needs who are attending Government preschools and schools, is now entering its final implementation phase, with updated eligibility criteria and a streamlined application process.

The Inclusive Education Support Program, which has been active since January 2019, has eligibility criteria that has been developed to align with national disability legislation and guidelines.

Under the new arrangements, children and students with additional needs who require minor adjustments to their learning no longer need to be assessed or apply for funding. Rather, support can be accessed directly from the preschool or school via a site allocated Inclusive Education Support Program Grant.

The new model was co-designed with parent groups, disability advocates and preschool and school representatives.

[More](#)

School Training Overhaul

Vocational courses undertaken by high school students will have to be industry-approved to attract State Government funding, in a shake-up aimed at ensuring teens are set on genuine career paths.

Education Minister John Gardner will on Thursday announce a VET for school students policy billed as the biggest overhaul in a generation.

It is designed to make high school VET the starting point for meeting future workforce needs, rather than just a fallback option for disengaged students.

Readiness assessments will be introduced for all vocational students in subsidised courses, so they are not set up to fail.

[Full Story](#)

Banning Mobile Phones In Schools

Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan has applauded Victoria and urged other jurisdictions to act now in banning mobile phones.

He later told reporters that evidence from Canada shows that banning mobiles in schools improves student performance by six per cent, equating to one hour of growth a week or five days a year.

But not everyone is happy with the suggestion, with experts highlighting the learning benefits of mobile devices and principals complaining of parents needing to be “weened” off communicating with their children via mobile phone.

[More](#)

New Play Tackles Youth Suicide

During Mental Health Month it’s important to remember that suicide is still the leading cause of death for Australians aged 15 – 44.

One way of raising more awareness about this issue in a non-threatening way is through art and drama.

This is what a new play, titled Jess Chooses Life, attempts to achieve in a 35-minute production that deals with the issue of suicide in the online world, where many young people reach breaking point before their parents realise the seriousness of the situation.

The play is based on Jess, whose parents see suicidal comments written on her computer, which precipitates a discussion about bullying and the suicide of her friend, Lydia.

[Read more](#)