



This week's stories from the media

- Teacher union puts new offer to ballot of members
- SAASSO Survey in Parliament
- Worrying decline in PISA test results
- Australia tanks in global rankings despite \$20bn boost
- SA school trials phone blocking technology
- Teaching becoming more challenging

SAASSO Survey In Parliament

SAAASSO's recent survey was cited in a parliamentary speech, by Greens MLC, the Hon Mark Parnell.

"....but what added to that support and was helpful for me was the newsletter that many of us received in our inboxes today from the South Australian Association of State School Organisations (SAASSO).

They had 1,362 people who responded. Nearly 80% - 79.41% - agreed that this was an overdue initiative and only 20% said no.

SAASSO have helpfully extracted not all of the 1,362 responses but a selection of the comments that people made.

Some of these people are teachers and some of them are parents of schoolchildren. They point out that the comments were generally supportive, but some people thought that the conversation was a little bit tacky.

I have found some of these quotes that I would not normally be comfortable talking about, but I am going to do it anyway."

[Read](#)

Teacher Union Put New State Government Offer To Ballot Of Members

We've had teacher strikes, no comments on student report cards and Christmas concerts moved to the daytime. But finally a resolution to a bitter industrial dispute seems near.

The bitter and long-running industrial dispute between public school teachers and the State Government could be nearing an end, after union leaders agreed to put a new offer to a ballot of members.

However, the union says it still has concerns over elements of the deal and has not made any recommendation to members about which way they should vote.

The dispute has dragged on for 18 months and involved full and half-day strikes, rolling stoppages, and controversial measures such as teachers refusing to write comments on student report cards and moving Christmas concerts to the daytime.

Salary increases remain at the levels the Government previously offered – 2.35% for teachers and 3.35% for principals and preschool directors, backdated to May.

But the further backdating of the offer has improved. It will be 1.35% for teachers from October 2018 to May this year, up from 1% previously on the table.

"This is a positive step forward and the Government is hopeful it will lead to a sensible resolution of our enterprise bargaining negotiations, which gives exceptionally fair and reasonable salary increases and also provides greater assistance and support to teachers in the classroom," Treasurer Rob Lucas said.

[More](#)



“...SAASSO have helpfully extracted ... a selection of the comments that people made....”

Worrying Decline In SA PISA Tests Results

South Australia has gone from being a leader in high school maths to among the worst in the country, international test results show.

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in reading, maths and science is run every three years with 15-year-olds in almost 80 countries. In Australia they are generally Year 10s.

The 2018 results show SA's mean scores declined in all three areas since 2015, all were below national averages, and for maths, below the OECD average.

From 2003-18, the proportion of SA students who reached Australia's national proficient standard in the maths test plummeted from 73% to 50%.

Minister John Gardner said PISA was less reliable than NAPLAN because of the small sample of students.

He noted the 2018 tests were conducted soon after the Marshall Government was elected, and pointed to lifts in some of SA's NAPLAN results this year, and in the Year 1 phonics check.

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PISA Australia Tanks In Global Rankings Despite 20bn Boost

Australia has plunged in global education rankings, with the nation performing at a significantly lower standard in reading, mathematics and science than a decade ago, despite government funding for schools rising by more than \$20bn over that period.

The 2018 PISA results comparing the academic performance of 79 countries reveal Australia's long-term declining academic achievement had continued, with scores now at record lows across all tested domains.

The PISA results show that the number of secondary students struggling to demonstrate proficiency has - increased, while the proportion of high achievers has slumped.

Australian students are now more than 3½ years behind their Chinese peers, and three years behind those in Singapore.

Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan labelled the results “disappointing” and worthy of “alarm bells”. In a strongly worded statement, he urged states to put political differences aside and agree to work together in the interests of students.

[More](#)

SA School Trials Phone Blocking

A school in regional SA is trialling a new initiative to curb mobile phone addiction among students.

Meningie Area School last week provided students with pouches that temporarily disable their phones during classes and breaks.

Principal Iain Love said the policy was already paying off, and was delighted by how quickly the school had changed.

He said more students were now playing games and sports in the schoolyard, which has been filled with a "huge amount of noise as they chatted to each other".

"They seem to be at the stage now where they're enjoying that nobody's got a phone and they're able to engage in other ways."

[Full Story](#)

Christmas Countdown

7 sleeps until school holidays!



Teaching Becoming More Challenging

The sense that Australian teachers have been teaching increasingly diverse classes has been confirmed, according to a new report released from ACER.

The study concluded that lower secondary schools and teachers are dealing with “more diverse and potentially challenging classrooms than across the OECD and in many high performing countries”.

The TALIS study found that Australian secondary classrooms have to cater for more students with special needs and migrant backgrounds, as well as more non-native speakers and refugees than the OECD average.

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